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WOODROW WILSON

AN INTERPRETATION

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WOODROW WILSON

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AN INTERPRETATION

BY

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"THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: A STUDY IN NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY," ETC.

BOSTON

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1918

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To

K. G.

MY SEVEREST AND MOST LENIENT
CRITIC

PREFACE

Of the dead it is easier to write than of the living. Of the dead, it is true, we speak with charity, our judgment is tempered even when it is critical, but the historian is able to deal fairly and dispassionately with the men who have passed; with approximate accuracy he can measure not only their intentions but appraise their achievements; the causes of failure are not difficult to determine. Spread before him are motives, policies, ambitions, the sum of all that make men great or ignoble, and historical values are determined by results. The perspective of history is the past.

The contemporary writer is denied these advantages. He is too near the events of which he writes. Often he is an actor, although his is a very minor rôle, in the unfolding drama. He is the scene shifter to whom the royal jewels are paste, but to the audience, looking at the stage through the sorcery of softened lights and the benevolence of distance, they are real. He is perplexed in his attempt to render judgment, to reconcile conflicting qualities, to be the impartial recorder; resisting the temptation to allow his feelings to accord undue praise or to indulge in unwarranted severity.

The contemporary writer is brought in contact not

with historical personages but with men, with men on whom the glamour of history has not yet fallen, who have not yet made history and passed into the keeping of the Immortals but are history in the making. And history invests its characters with a quality of its own. It makes them either very great or very small, it places them on a pedestal for all ages to do them reverence, or degrades them to earn the contempt of posterity — for history is no gentle muse but is always extreme; but whatever the recorded verdict, to us of a later day they have ceased to be men and have become legendary figures. Our contemporaries are men, men like ourselves, whom daily we judge, criticize, condemn or approve to meet our passing mood.

I have made no attempt to write either history or a biography of Woodrow Wilson. That time has not yet come. The history of the Administration of President Wilson it would be inadvisable to write now, — for reasons so obvious they need no enlargement, — nor would it be possible unless the writer were in possession of letters, diaries, documents and state papers that are not likely to gratify this generation. Some of these, a few, are even now available, but discretion imposes silence. For history we must wait until time permits disclosures that now would be inopportune. What I have endeavored to do is to interpret the character and motives of Mr. Wilson as revealed by his speeches, writings and statesmanship, letting the reader draw his conclusions from the evidence presented.

It has seemed to me that it is work that ought to be done, not only because the man who to-day occupies the largest place in the world's thought is almost as little understood by his own people as he is by the peoples of other countries and still remains an enigma, but a certain interest may attach to the work of a contemporary foreign observer who, while having the benefit of long residence in the United States, and an intimate knowledge of its people and politics, may justly claim to take a detached point of view and to be uninfluenced by personal or political considerations. It is in that spirit of detachment, as if I were dealing with the past and not the present, I have endeavored to write; and while, I repeat, this is not history, I have not been unmindful of the responsibility of the historian.

In his preface to "Division and Reunion" Mr. Wilson wrote: "I cannot claim to have judged rightly in all cases as between parties. I can claim, however, impartiality of judgment; for impartiality is a matter of the heart, and I know with what disposition I have written." That sentiment I make my own. I cannot hope that in all my judgments I have been correct, that I have perhaps in all cases done justice, but I can claim to have written with sincerity and a purpose, striving to tell the truth as it is given to me to see it.

WASHINGTON, October, 1918.

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WOODROW WILSON

AN INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER I

The Beginning of Reform

I

When Woodrow Wilson came to the White House on the fourth of March, 1913, the Democratic party returned to power after sixteen years in opposition. Mr. Wilson's Democratic predecessor, Mr. Cleveland, left as a legacy to his successor war or peace with Spain. That war, fought in the year following Mr. McKinley's inauguration, had far-reaching consequences for the United States: for the first time since it became a nation the United States was the master of oversea dependencies and the ruler of subject races; it became an Asiatic power and its frontier was flung seven thousand miles across the Pacific. In the year following peace the American people were to be witness to another and more costly war when the Boers challenged the power of England; and five years later the American people, in common with the rest of the world, were witness to a still mightier struggle when

Japan took up arms against Russia to decide the mastery of the Far East.

Yet those three wars, important in their political effects to the nations involved, produced little impression upon American national consciousness. The thought of America had turned from war to peace, the great problems that men were grappling with were not military conquest but social reform. A new spirit had entered into men. They were reaching out for something better than they had, they were striving to remove the inequality and injustice of an artificially stimulated social system. This spirit was moving men in all parts of the world, but nowhere perhaps was its force so insistent as in the United States. Humanity was groping and toiling, not sure what it was seeking, and yet quite sure what it sought was to be found; not always wise in its experiments, and yet with faith struggling.

Reform was in the air. The social order was changing; the change had almost come. Men were looking at life with new vision. In the three great Democracies of the world, in England, France and the United States, social experimentation was being tried on a vast scale. Woman suffrage, prohibition, old-age pensions, State insurance, the curbing of the power of monopoly and the arrogance of wealth, these were symptoms of a mental and spiritual rebirth. It was a time of excessive luxury, of great wealth, of intense selfishness; in some respects materialism had a deeper

hold than ever before in the world's history; and yet even those deepest sunk in their materialism, who defended the existing order and resented change, dimly saw that change was inevitable, vaguely felt that justice cried for reform, but hoped only it might be postponed so that their comfort would not be disturbed. To the great mass, not alone the downtrodden and the poor and the illiterate, the day of their deliverance was near.

2

It was fitting these aspirations should be symbolized in the person of the newly elected President of the United States. To Mr. Wilson Democracy was less a political belief than an immanent conviction, and he had given repeated proof of his faith. Imbued in the tenets of his political forefathers, seeing in their code a moral guidance which was also the rule of statesmanship, reposing confidence in the wisdom of the people to govern themselves, rejecting the thought that they were incapable of self-government and must necessarily be directed by a selected class, his sympathies and his intellect made him support the cause of the people against privilege.

He was no noisy champion. He offered no hostages to the great Demos and had no nostrums to bring universal salvation. He had no picturesque or romantic past and had known no long and bitter struggle against adversity. As a boy he had not toiled beyond his

strength, and as a man he had not acquired learning in odd moments snatched from his work. Of gentle birth and with an inherited love of scholarship, he passed through school and college to begin, as he believed, his chosen vocation of the law, and to abandon it forever two years later. It is popular impression that Mr. Wilson divorced himself thus early from his profession because it failed to provide him adequate support, which is generally recognized as valid ground for divorce, but incompatibility of temperament was the real reason for the speedy dissolution of the incongruous union. Mr. Wilson, who began the practice of his profession in Atlanta, was quickly disillusioned when he discovered the depth and slime of the gulf that separated the philosophy of law from its practice. To an imaginative but philosophically matured youth who absorbed the theory of law from textbooks in the seclusion of college or heard the science of jurisprudence expounded in the classroom, its precision and logical foundation must have charmed a mind that clarified thought and was always strongly responsive to a sense of justice; but the law in its practical application came as a shock.

Atlanta at that time was no worse, and certainly no better, than other Southern cities, and its public and professional morality was the standard of its day. At the Atlanta bar there were men of high professional standing whose code was as rigid and narrow as the

sternest critic could demand, but there were also a goodly proportion of "ambulance chasers", tricksters and dishonest advocates who promoted litigation in the hope of gaining fees irrespective of the merits of the cause. The atmosphere disgusted Mr. Wilson. He found himself brought in competition with men of dubious morals; the competition was not to his liking, nor were his surroundings congenial. Deliberately he turned his back on them, recognizing at that early age, and he was only twenty-five, that he could better serve himself and society by writing and teaching the philosophy of the law than by helping its contamination. This was the explanation he made to his friend, Albert Shaw (the present editor of the *Review of Reviews*), when he came to Baltimore to take a postgraduate course at Johns Hopkins. "There is Blank," mentioning the name of a well-known practitioner who was rapidly becoming rich, he said to young Shaw, who relates the incident, "who has made a success by taking personal injury cases against the railways and other corporations and is none too scrupulous about the character and testimony of his witnesses, and perhaps in time I may be equally successful." But that was not the success he craved or the measure of his ambition. That he had the courage to renounce a profession whose methods were to him distasteful and had the strength of will to take up a new profession for which he felt himself better fitted and one making a stronger appeal to him,

shows not only the strength of character and inflexibility of will that was later to puzzle political supporters and political opponents, but also that the early bent of his thoughts was now unalterably fixed.

In 1879, then a student at Princeton, he had written for the *International Review* an essay entitled "Cabinet Government in the United States", which six years later appeared in book form as "Congressional Government", and is the most important of Mr. Wilson's works. "Congressional Government" is an amplification of the *International Review* essay; the underlying thought and the philosophic treatment remain unchanged. It is an extraordinary piece of work to have been done by a youth of twenty-three, in its way as rare an example of precociousness, maturity of judgment and grasp of his subject as Byron's "Childe Harold."

In those two years from 1883 to 1885, when he was doing graduate work at Johns Hopkins in political economy and history, he was preparing for the part he intended to play. Whether that included politics it is impossible to say, for whatever dreams beguiled him or ambitions spurred his fancy he shared his confidence with no one so far as I have been able to learn; but it is certain he was determined not only to influence thought by his pen but also to appeal to the emotion of intellect through speech. In Baltimore he was a close and persistent student, devoting himself not only to political economy and history but also to a

study of the best masters of English forensic oratory. He read with critical discrimination and a purpose now quite evident the parliamentary speeches and the public addresses of Burke and Chatham and Grattan and other men equally well known, dissecting them, appraising them, testing them, catching their tricks of style and tearing from their stilled hearts the secret that can never still the voice of the really great orator. He wanted to be their compeer, and he was learning in their school.

Shaw was one of the few men with whom Mr. Wilson was on terms of intimacy at that time. Mr. Wilson was neither a recluse nor unsociable; he was a man with a serious purpose, although with always a sense of dry humor, as every man of imagination must have, but he was too deeply engrossed in study to have either the time or inclination for frivolity. As he wrote "Congressional Government" he gave his manuscript to Shaw to read, not to invite criticism, because even then Mr. Wilson did not invite criticism any more than now he welcomes opposition; perhaps simply for his approval. The two young men were engaged on work that had something in common. While Mr. Wilson was studying history and political economy and parliamentary debate, Shaw was studying the development of municipal government in Europe and America. And Shaw recalls what is eminently characteristic of Mr. Wilson and shows how early the iron mold of his character was formed.

Baltimore is only forty miles from Washington, and in Washington the Congressional Government of which the Johns Hopkins student was writing was functioning, but Mr. Wilson, Doctor Shaw believes, seldom if ever went to Washington during those two years. Almost any other man, it is safe to say, would have wanted to see the machine at work, would have welcomed the opportunity to talk with the engineers, would have gladly absorbed the atmosphere so as to create a background. Mr. Bryce came to America to confirm by observation theoretical judgments. Mr. Wilson, in the cold serenity of detachment, kept aloof, his thoughts becoming crystal in the alembic of his mind. The marvel is that the youth of twenty-three, who knew nothing of Washington, who had no practical knowledge of government or the methods of the legislature, and the young man six years later who was so sure of his conclusions that he saw no necessity to revise them, should have produced the best and most authoritative work on the subject. Genius has been likened to the spider who draws from itself the filaments of its web; and genius creates without extraneous assistance, drawing on its own stored-up endowment. "Congressional Government" is almost the touch of genius.

3

Leaving Johns Hopkins in 1885 to accept the chair of history and political economy in Bryn Mawr

College, Pennsylvania, an institution for the higher education of women, Mr. Wilson's career falls naturally into three grand divisions, and it is a career unparalleled in America or England, or any other democratic country, ancient or modern: 1. the teacher and secular preacher; 2. the politician; 3. the President. For twenty-five years, from 1885 to 1910, when he was elected Governor of New Jersey, his entire time was given to pedagogical work, to writing and to lecturing. He took no active part in politics, and whatever influence he exercised on the political thought of his day was indirect and exercised through his books and addresses on the philosophic meaning of history read by the light of modern problems of government and politics.

His audience was never in any sense popular. He had no gift of phrase or thought to arrest for an instant the scurrying feet of the jostling crowd. He was deficient in the showman's arts and ignorant of the trick of self advertisement. There have been college professors who have attained the fleeting honor of shrieking headlines on the front page and gained the proud distinction of the editorial column by, at "the psychological moment" so beloved of editors hungering for a sensation, denouncing the institution of marriage or advocating too much marriage, or something else equally as irregular. In the quarter of a century that he taught and spoke Mr. Wilson escaped this homage.

His appeal had always been to the intellectuals, to those whom Americans, with their gift for crystallizing a sentence in a word or two, know as "highbrows." He was one of the *cognoscenti*, and it was the *cognoscenti* he sought as his audience. He was over the heads of the masses, and the masses, had they read or heard him, would have turned away weary and without comprehension of his message, which they would have dismissed succinctly as "highbrow stuff", and therefore outside of their class. His addresses were delivered before selected audiences, lawyers, teachers, civic reformers, which precluded the general public from hearing him, even if they had the inclination; and his speeches were not of a character to make them popular reading and therefore to justify the press in giving them extended space. He wrote for magazines and reviews that were exotic so far as the general public was concerned, and whose limited circulation was confined to the educated. To the multitude his books were recondite, admirable although they are in style, lucidity and the crystal clearness of his thought. His one attempt at popularity, "A History of the American People", his friends regret. Mr. Wilson can write nothing without giving it distinction, and in the five volumes may be found flashes of his style and shrewd analysis that redeem the work from dullness, but it is not quite bad enough to be really "popular" and widely read, and it is not quite good enough to be the historian's history.

Mr. Wilson's position and standing in the educational world brought to him an ever-widening circle of acquaintances, and personally or by reputation he was constantly becoming better known, but this knowledge was confined to a class in the aggregate numerically large, but actually only a minor fraction of the whole. His name carried weight with educators, literati, students of the science of government, graduates of schools and colleges, but to the workingman, the great middle class, perhaps a majority of business men and the rank and file of the political world, it meant nothing. Mr. Wilson's obscurity — and the use of the word is permissible — came from his having connected himself with no great popular movement, with leading no clamorous demand for sudden reform, with having neither sought nor held political office. Unlike as they may be in many things, in one thing the three great Democracies of America, England and France have the same common trait. Men may achieve fame through success at the bar, by literature, in discovery or invention or by accumulating a huge fortune, but it is as true in America as it is in England and France that to become known, to become what Bagehot calls "not only household words, but household ideas", a man must be a political leader, and his fellow men, again to borrow a thought from Bagehot, must have a conception, not, perhaps, in all respects a true, but a most vivid conception of what he is like. In a word,

you cannot have a leader unless you are able to visualize him; he must symbolize not merely an idea but a personality; he cannot remain, so Bagehot believed, an unknown quantity. In this sense Mr. Wilson, up to the time of his election as Governor of New Jersey, was obscure. In this sense he had none of the requirements believed necessary for leadership. In this sense, to the majority of his countrymen, he was an unknown quantity. Not only had they no vivid conception of him, but all that their imagination could picture was blurred, the indistinct outlines of a name without substance.

In other countries, at long intervals under the stress of a great popular movement or the fear of national disaster, men hitherto obscure, by their fiery eloquence, have sprung into prominence and seized power; and the politician "powerful in faction and debate" may count with reasonable certainty on success. Here there was nothing of the kind. No great emergency threatened, the people were not stirred by fear, their future was not in peril. From the presidency of Princeton University Mr. Wilson passed to the Governor's chair. He was then fifty-four years old, and he was holding his first political office. It is not exaggeration to say that no man was ever elected to high office under similar circumstances, and no man was so much of an unknown quantity to the great body of the electorate as Woodrow Wilson when he took the oath of service to the people.

CHAPTER II

Agitation and Unrest

1

For the purposes of this interpretation it is unnecessary to follow the campaign that led to Mr. Wilson's election as Governor of New Jersey, but it is requisite to ascertain the causes that made possible the election of a man who, in the sense that has already been noted, was obscure and so little identified in the public mind with practical politics. Mr. Wilson was a fitting candidate because he peculiarly typified the new day.

It is to the advantage of a man seeking political office that he shall have a past, and sometimes it is of even greater advantage that he shall be the "unknown quantity" that Bagehot thought made him impossible; "that he should wear a clean and irreproachable insignificance", in Mr. Wilson's own phrase. If he belongs to the "old guard" and has served in various capacities, his party knows what to expect from him, and if his party is in the majority he goes through simply because party discipline compels his acceptance. An unknown man brings to

his candidacy a certain element of romance and mystery; he appeals to that large and constantly increasing section of the electorate that distrusts the professional politician and fears his associations. Mr. Wilson disarmed opposition. Lawyers, doctors, men of business, clergymen even, when reform was in the air and the ultra-respectable vote had to be catered to, have been selected as candidates for Governor, but seldom if ever has the president of a great university passed from the seclusion of academic quiet to the turmoil of politics. If, in a sense, the men to whom he appealed for their suffrages knew little of him, on the other hand the little they knew was in his favor. He occupied a high and dignified position; his profession had kept him aloof from the sordidness that the public associates with the sharp practices of the lawyer or the tricky morality of the man of business; much as the public may pretend a contempt for the unpractical scholar, nevertheless it has a respect for learning. And in a day of great wealth, when there was a deep undercurrent of resentment against great wealth and, in the popular belief, its unlicensed power, it did not disparage Mr. Wilson that he was a poor man and a toiler.

Even more than this, perhaps, he was the voice of the new spirit, as the electors were soon to know, as he went up and down the State addressing political meetings, and they were brought under the influence of his incomparable oratory and learned the principles

he had so long espoused and the reforms he promised them.

They had heard much of reform and were weary of the mirage of false hopes, and yet no matter how often they were disappointed their faith remained unshaken and hope never deserted them. Mr. Cleveland, the first Democratic President since the Civil War, had quickened public conscience when, as was said, "he put humanity into the tariff" and brought to the Presidency a new conception of public duty. Although many great achievements stood to their credit and they placed on the statute books much memorable legislation, so long had the Republican party been in power authority made them arrogant, abuse fattened on their legislation and a privileged class was becoming securely intrenched; but the Republicans were saved by the intellectual poverty of their opponents and the incapacity of Democratic leaders. Mr. Cleveland's first election was a social revolution, bloodless though it was; but it was nevertheless a revolt of the masses against the classes; and in the day before the people spoke through the ballot Mr. Cleveland would have come into power backed by the pikes and swords of his adherents, or, like Wat Tyler, paid the penalty for attempting to overthrow the established order.

Mr. Cleveland founded no era, but as Mr. Wilson wrote of him shortly after his death when the passion he aroused was still hot and justice was still denied

him, "he played a great part"; he forestalled what is now the verdict of history when he said, "no such great personality has appeared in our politics since Lincoln", and with equal truth that "he has made policies and altered parties after the fashion of an earlier age in our history." Yet he founded no era, he broke the Republican succession but left no heir; what he did was shortly undone, and the Republicans were intrenched for sixteen years. Intrenched, yes, but they were always facing a foe who while not strong enough to carry the assault was no longer to be despised.

2

Mr. Bryan, who consistently led his party to defeat but nevertheless retained its affection and admiration, is one of the pathetic figures of history. Well meaning, with high principles and ideals, wandering in an ultramontane kingdom of impossible perfection, strictly adhering to his own rigid code, he was given a great opportunity and accomplished nothing. Had Mr. Bryan been a man of greater flexibility, with a mind cast in a more generous mold, had he been able to escape from the dwarfing influences of his environment and the parochial school of politics in which he trained, had he, in short, been able to see life whole and been gifted with a wider knowledge of life and a fuller understanding of its meaning, less intolerant because of his pragmatic virtue and more ready to

recognize that in all men there is a spark of virtue even if it is obscured by some vice, the story might have been differently written. He did not attain his great ambition, the Presidency, that thrice was to be his and eluded him, but that must not blind us to the great influence he exercised in shaping public opinion. He crystallized what before had been vague and indeterminate. He had no power of clear thinking and his argument was always specious, nevertheless he was able to put into concrete form the nebulous thoughts of men unable to give them coherence. It was his misfortune, the same ill luck that always pursued him, that he must tie the living body of justice to the corpse of economics. Political economy is a science too abstruse for the masses, who are moved less by reason than by prejudice and an inherited tradition of injustice, but Mr. Bryan, through the force of his oratory, his sincerity and his human appeal, articulated his economic skeleton, he clothed it in living flesh, and the people to whom he preached had a glimmering of a social system resting on money and the power of money in legislation. Defeated though he was, too revolutionary for his conservative times, a century too late or a quarter of a century too soon, he dropped in fertile soil the seed of unrest which he was to live to see bring forth fruit, but not for his enjoyment.

Mr. McKinley, who defeated Mr. Bryan and succeeded Mr. Cleveland, accepted the verdict as a man-

date to stamp out the radicalism to which Mr. Bryan had given encouragement and bring back the country to the safe and easy path of "conservatism"; a policy that accorded with his political beliefs and affiliations. The work that Mr. Cleveland had done, the things complained of which was the protest of the six million men who voted for Mr. Bryan, Mr. McKinley and his party ignored. The Republican party had been returned to power to carry out — as the party believed, and in a way had a right to believe — the policies that Republican Presidents and Republican majorities in Congress year after year had fastened on the country. To the politician, who reads history only by the light of the latest election returns, the future was not to be feared; yet reform was coming, though few men could hear the quiet footsteps of the herald of its approach.

The forces that were behind Mr. McKinley gave strength to the rapidly increasing discontent. Mr. McKinley's amiability, his blameless life, his simplicity of character made him respected personally, but the resentment against the men who shaped and carried out his policies, who, in the popular belief, manipulated the government for the benefit of a privileged class, could not be quieted. One of the great elements of strength of the Republicans had been the number of newspapers of large circulation and vigorously edited that supported their principles, but of recent years there had grown up a healthy Democratic and

Independent Press that mercilessly criticized their opponents and kept alive the demand for reform. There had also come into existence a Press that called itself Independent, Republican or Democratic, according to the community in which it circulated, but which pandered to passion and class hatred, and without regard to truth or decency indiscriminately attacked men and measures, not because they were unfit or bad, but to increase their circulation and power. Animated by the basest and most sordid motives, but stealing the livery of virtue and pretending only disinterestedness and sympathy for the people powerless to defend themselves, these newspapers made the unintelligent and ignorant believe their condition was intolerable and could only be remedied by a violent readjustment of society.

3

The bullet in the hand of a man half mad, half fanatic cut the slender cord that had long been weakening under the strain. In the natural order of things the change was bound to come, but it would have come gradually and without shock; now the change was cataclysmic. Mr. McKinley's successor, young, virile, undisciplined, with a dramatic imagination and a love of show, had not been unobservant of the tendency of the times, nor had he failed to note that although Mr. Bryan was defeated and Mr. McKinley elected, it was Mr. Bryan who held the passionate

affection of the people, it was he who had stirred their emotions as they had not been moved since Lincoln made politics a moral issue. Mr. Roosevelt with more skill, more subtlety, more adroitness, with a greater command of phrase and a more vivid appeal to imagination, did what Mr. Bryan more stolidly had attempted to do and failed. Mr. Bryan whimsically remarked that Mr. Roosevelt stole his clothes while he went in bathing, which was the same accusation an English statesman had brought against his rival many years earlier. It was the irony of fate that what had been condemned in Mr. Bryan as being too dangerous and vicious, and rejected by the country as subversive of the security of society, was now, when championed by Mr. Roosevelt, accepted not as destructively radical but constructively "progressive." There was nothing extraordinary about this; it is the same thing that has happened in every country in every age. A new idea is always dangerous until it is old, and it becomes old only when the world has advanced far enough to accept it without fear.

Mr. Roosevelt satisfied a certain want, but he did not go far enough. The progressive zealot was at heart a Republican. The Roosevelt administration was still the party of McKinley. Any discussion of American politics and their reaction on American sociology must inevitably lead to the tariff. Rightly or wrongly, the American people are divided into two camps, one believing that the source of all their pros-

perity is in the protective tariff, the other equally convinced that the tariff is the root of all evils. The expectation was great that Mr. Roosevelt would revise the tariff, revise it downward in the interest of the people and relieve them of the heavy exactions which the Dingley tariff, enacted in the McKinley administration, imposed upon them. The expectation was natural. Mr. Roosevelt had challenged abuse, he had laid the ax of reform at more than one iniquity, and the greatest of all abuses, the one whose iniquities pressed hardest, was the high tariff, according to its opponents. Mr. Roosevelt's passion for reform was restrained by a political superstition more potent than reason: the belief that the political party that revises the tariff invites defeat at the next election. The Republican party, that was still the party of McKinley, even though the young reformer was its titular head, was content to respect this superstition and not hazard fate. After seven years of power Mr. Roosevelt left the tariff untouched.

Mr. Taft was elected by a vote large enough to suggest that the struggle in the convention left no heart-burnings, and that the country welcomed the perpetuation of the McKinley-Roosevelt régime. Mr. Taft was never the unanimous choice of his party, and he was soon to learn this. The adherents of Mr. Roosevelt had hoped he would again be the candidate of the party, and when this was impossible they accepted Mr. Taft because they had no alter-

native, but without enthusiasm, grudgingly and reluctantly, looking forward to enduring the next four years and then to bringing Mr. Roosevelt back. The demand for the revision of the tariff was now so insistent it could not be ignored, and Mr. Taft, as a matter of duty, urged revision upon Congress. The bill was not perfect, — it is doubtful if a perfect tariff bill can ever be made, — but Mr. Taft could sign it without wrench of conscience, although some of the schedules did not satisfy him. But the country, led by the demagogic press and the men who were eagerly seeking an opportunity to weaken the administration and prevent Mr. Taft's renomination so as to clear the way for Mr. Roosevelt, found only fault in the measure. The law of 1828 was called the tariff of abominations; this was a tariff of dishonor, according to its opponents, as disgraceful to the men by whose votes it was enacted as it was a betrayal of the covenant by the President who signed it. Bitterly and continuously attacked by his own party and not spared by his political opponents, it is not surprising that the people believed Mr. Taft to be weak and cowardly, and that he was the creature of the great predatory interests who were under the special guardianship of the Republican party. No more unscrupulous cabal has been known in politics; no man was more maligned or more indecently treated by men who were under every obligation to treat him fairly. While this injustice in one sense accom-

plished its purpose, the results were far different from what its instigators hoped for. Mr. Roosevelt, yielding to his ambition and the selfish advice of men who hoped to climb to exalted or petty office on his success, announced himself as a candidate of the Progressive party for the Presidency, Mr. Taft was renominated by the Republicans, and Mr. Wilson, whose term as Governor of New Jersey had not then expired, was nominated by the Democrats.

For the second time in American politics the party in the majority lost the Presidency through internecine strife. In 1860 the newly formed Republican party was in the minority, but a hopeless division in the Democratic convention between the radicals and conservatives over slavery led to a split and the nomination of two candidates, whose combined vote was larger than that cast for Mr. Lincoln, the Republican candidate; and it was one of the taunts leveled at Mr. Lincoln that he was "a minority President." In 1912 history repeated itself. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Taft split the Republican vote, thus insuring the election of Mr. Wilson, who, like his great predecessor, was termed in reproach by some of his more violent opponents "a minority President", although his title was clear.

4

Whether Mr. Wilson would have been elected had there been no factional fight in the Republican party

is an entertaining but idle speculation, but the effect of the agitation of the last few years and the attacks on Mr. Taft and his administration were now having their result. Mr. Roosevelt had disappointed the country. He had kept things in a ferment, he had been the most potent instrument to encourage dissatisfaction and create unrest, but of real accomplishment he could claim almost nothing. He found abuses and left them undisturbed, and while he had a great following, dazzled by his brilliancy, his ready speech and his restlessness, that kept him constantly in the public gaze, as a political or party leader, in the real sense of the word, he was a failure because he stood for no great policy and was identified with no great movement or reform. One of his judicious critics — doubtless unconsciously recalling Hazlitt: "No man is truly great who is great only in his lifetime. The test of greatness is the page of history" — said of him that he had a great personality, but "personality ends at the grave." He had not the genius to build empires, nor had he the plodding industry and the singleness of purpose that make a man of mediocre abilities a successful administrator. "History is achievement," this critic remarked, "and the immortal figures of history are the men who have achieved, who did something, noble or infamous. It was Mr. Roosevelt's misfortune that too many subjects too vividly interested him, and he scattered his energies over a field so large that he merely scratched

the surface instead of plowing deep." There is perhaps much truth in this short summary.

Mr. Roosevelt, having been tried and having failed to meet the test to the disappointment of the public, the public, with characteristic illogicality, vented upon Mr. Taft its displeasure. Mr. Taft believed that under the administration of his predecessor there had grown up a carelessness for the strict letter of the law and the restrictions of the Constitution that threatened stability and the safety of institutions; that the country had become dangerously radical and it was his duty to restore the balance and uphold the supremacy of the law. Unfortunately for Mr. Taft's peace of mind and personal fortunes he failed to understand that Mr. Roosevelt was symptomatic of his time, and what to superficial observers seemed the dangerous taint of radicalism, a passing social fever that could be cured by the palliative treatment of wise legislation, had now become chronic.

The evils that Mr. Cleveland with dignity and courage corrected, and the agitation begun by Mr. Bryan and kept alive by Mr. Roosevelt had given the people if not a clearer at least a different understanding of the relation that ought to exist between them and government. For many years they had looked upon politics as an intricate game in which nominally they took the largest part and held the trump cards, and although they played it and pretended they knew what they were doing, in private they con-

fessed they knew nothing, that instead of being the players they were merely marionettes with the strings in the hands of a few men of skill or cunning. Their eyes had been opened, and they saw that politics was something more than a game in which the players changed sides, and that government had a vital, a more solemn meaning than the tax gatherer and the policeman. They had long remained in ignorance of the truth that the framework of society is political, that their welfare, their comfort and their happiness could not be dissociated from politics, that there could be no advancement independent of government, but only through the efforts of government. To the faithful whose creed that the best governed country is the least governed country, this was heretical, an entirely wrong and irregular concept of government, and shocking to the disciples of individualism, to whom paternalism is a thing of reproach, who conceived the function of government to be merely to impose taxes and punish the offender in the name of society.

5

The Puritan made America what she is, and although the admixture of the blood of many foreign races has diluted the strain of Puritanism its spirit survives. To the Puritan his religion was not a thing apart from life but the very essence of life; it was not simply a religious code but a rule of conduct,

political as well as moral; not a cloak to be worn only on Sunday but the garb in which men worked as well as played; they wore it joyously when no danger threatened and wore it proudly when death was faced. Without the grim power of expression of the Puritan, but with the same grim determination, the children of the Puritan were proving their heritage. Unconsciously they were following in his footsteps, like him they were vexed with doubts, like him they were searching their souls, like him they were continually asking why and wanting to have the great mystery explained. It was not, however, the meaning and mystery of death that appalled them, it was the meaning and mystery of the inequalities, the injustice, the brutality of life. The masses are often deluded by words, but only for an instant, as progress is reckoned, are they deluded by false principles. They had been content to believe that poverty was as inevitable as death, that misery was the wisdom of God that might not be questioned, that suffering and hunger had always been. The truth of these things they doubted but could not deny, but they groped in their blindness and dumb rage until the falsity of what they had been told became clear. What had been in their hearts but found no voice was voiced for them. They were no longer content to accept poverty, toil, suffering as their normal lot; it was not the visitation of God but the iniquity of man. What man had done man could undo, and the weapon to

dethrone the oppressor, to liberate them, was politics. The way of escape was through the government, government that would do justice to all men, treat all men with the same impartiality, make it impossible for a few men to lord it over their fellows.

There was nothing surprising about this. It was the same aspiration that the masses have always had, the same resentment they have always shown; only now the masses were more intelligent than they had ever been, more cohesive, more readily responsive to leadership and suggestion, better able to understand the selfishness of those over them and to see that reformation, to be real and lasting and to root out inequality and injustice, must be built on the solid foundation of truth and justice, and the fellowship of man must be a living force. It would be misleading the reader to convey the impression that what has been thus hastily sketched found its expression in concrete form. Thought is born long before it becomes articulate. Ideas exist, but not before they are quickened into life is the world richer. What men thought and believed they could not express, but they could feel. There was ceaseless agitation and discussion, vagrant thoughts floated to the surface like bubbles from the unfathomed depth, some of them to glitter for a moment in the sun and burst and disappear into the void before they could be grasped by eager hands. But other thoughts floated on the stream; they carried the seed of life, they were fertilized by the

contact of minds and bore their fruit. Men were ready to try an experiment and to see whether their theories were workable.

It has been thought advisable to give this brief résumé of the state of public opinion preceding Mr. Wilson's entry into politics because many Americans under the pressure of their own intimate affairs only imperfectly realize the great intellectual revolution of which they were a part; and to foreigners, now so keenly interested in everything pertaining to America, this insight into American social development may not be unwelcome. It is necessary, moreover, because it makes more comprehensible the difficulties Mr. Wilson had to contend with and the reason he was able to overcome them.

CHAPTER III

The Man

1

It was not surprising that Mr. Wilson should have been selected as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency. Men were looking for a champion rather than a political leader in the ordinary use of that word; one who thought as they did, who shared with them their aspirations and held the same ideals. The division in the Republican party insured the election of the Democratic candidate, unless the Democrats were so foolish as to nominate a candidate who did not have the confidence of the public, a species of political folly of which they had more than once been guilty. Victory was theirs if they displayed prudence and common sense, and it was incumbent upon them to pass over the claims of hack politicians and select a man truly representative of the prevailing spirit, who would antagonize neither the workingman distrustful of promises never fulfilled, nor his employer fearful of the radicalism of impractical theorists.

Mr. Wilson measured up to these requirements. As Governor of New Jersey he had served his political

novitiate. The governorship of a State, he had said, "is very like a small presidency; or, rather, the presidency is very like a big governorship." When he was elected Governor, his friends knew that he had been put in training for the higher office. Mr. Wilson must have known this himself, must of course have had the natural and proper ambition to enter the larger field of service and reach the Presidency. It was as an unknown quantity he went to the Governor's office in 1910; the nominations would not be made until 1912, and he had two years, if he were the ordinary politician, in which to build up his machine, to steer the nice course between the rocks of radicalism and the shoals of conservatism, so skillfully to trim his sails that every passing breeze and every cross current could be availed of to bring him to harbor.

If he entered the Governor's chair as the unknown quantity politically, in those two years he stamped his individuality upon the country, and put his impress upon legislation. No one now need further to question who he was or what he stood for, the principles he believed in or the rule of conduct he had adopted for himself. He had shown that he was possessed of a stubborn political courage that was at times somewhat disconcerting to his more timid admirers who could only see the impolicy of making enemies when political adroitness required he should be making only friends; forgetting that valuable as friends are to a politician even more valuable are enemies judiciously

selected. His honesty and his adherence to the pledges he made before election alienated powerful interests; his determination to be the representative of the people instead of the spokesman of a party angered hack politicians, who had won no battles by those tactics. To them it was ingratitude and a violation of the fundamental principle of politics that to the victors belong the spoils of victory. It was exactly what might have been predicted of an amateur in politics, of the theoretical professor whose mind still worked in the narrow confines of the classroom, and to whom the legislature was only a larger faculty. And Mr. Wilson had another fault that was annoying to the party workers, each of them believing himself to be a king maker in his own fief or barony and entitled to the respect and deference that belong to power and prominence. Vanity is the universal quality, in men no less than in women; it is perhaps stronger in the human race than any other passion or emotion, and there is no class of men whose vanity is greater than the politician's. He lives for it and on it. Vanity is the impelling motive to make the majority of men take to politics, and having tasted of it they cannot forego it. Every man elected to high office, every governor or senator or President, is never allowed to forget that he owes his election to the fidelity, intelligence and industry of the particular politician who at the moment is seeking his just reward for his invaluable services, and he really believes, it becomes

with him an obsession, that but for him the election would have been lost.

Nothing more deeply wounds the sensitive soul of the professional politician than to have his merits ignored. He not only wants to shine in the light of reflected greatness, which is as pleasing to vanity as admiration to a woman no longer young, but to capitalize it and increase his importance by creating the belief among his constituents and supporters of his influence with the great. Men who thought Mr. Wilson was under obligation to them, that to them he owed his election and must show his gratitude and be sensible of their political wisdom and judgment by consulting them and being guided by their experience, had their pride hurt and their vanity wounded when they learned they had no influence with the Governor, who did not consider they had any special claim upon him. It was not they but the people to whom he owed obligation; he had no duty except to himself and the people. In Governor Wilson the chagrined politicians found a man who was willing to take counsel when he sought it, and after listening often disregarded it; who was self-confident to the verge of obstinacy; who, tyro though he was in politics, had the political instinct to disregard the old formulas of the textbooks and adopt methods of his own devising, which generally proved to be correct; preferring to grapple in solitude with his problems and unassisted find their solution. It brought him the accusation of

being too self-centered to become a great leader, too distrustful of and too remote from the people to appeal to them or to hold their favor. Mortified vanity found its explanation in the contempt the professional has for the bungling amateur. Here was the theoretical professor whose mind still worked in the narrow confines of the classroom, and to whom the legislature was only a larger faculty.

2

We are to deal with a man who in his youth read the Constitution of the United States and the political history of his country and made a discovery. It is the privilege of youth to make discoveries, to allow their enthusiasm to carry them away, to believe with all the fiery splendor of youth they have come to redeem the world, and a few years later to have their illusions humorously broken by experience.

We are to deal with a man who, having made his discovery, never wavered and who thirty years later was to be given the opportunity to make practical application of his theories. He had the genius to see that a political system with the respect of age, accepted to carry out the purpose of its designers, had, through sheer accident, become perverted, and instead of being the perfect instrument it was supposed to be was in practice vicious. Seeing this he had the courage to declare what he believed. Believing this he had even the greater courage, when given power,

to apply the remedy. It is not of consequence to discuss whether his theory of government is right or wrong, whether he read the Constitution correctly and understood the purpose of the men who framed it or distorted it to suit his own ideas; what is of importance is intelligently to understand the principles which governed him.

Mr. Wilson believed that the framers of the Constitution had intended one thing and circumstances had made it another. Bagehot showed that the "literary theory" — the expression is Bagehot's — of the British Constitution was at variance with its practical working. Mr. Wilson found that the nicely adjusted theoretical checks and balances of the American Constitution existed in fiction only, and that the Government of the United States was a government by Congressional Committee. The standing committees of Congress had usurped not only the power of Congress itself and become more powerful than their creators, but they had also cheapened the importance of the President and destroyed all sense of responsibility. It was that more than anything — government by Congressional Committee without responsibility — he regarded as vicious and subversive of proper government. This is the thesis of "Congressional Government", set forth in a very remarkable way. Throughout the book he shows how the intent of the makers of the Constitution had been corrupted, and in his conclusion, summarizing what

he has written, he says: "This is the defect to which, it will be observed, I am constantly recurring; to which I recur again and again because every examination of the system, at whatsoever point begun, leads inevitably to it as a central secret." He saw the weakness of a system that destroyed responsibility, and knew that efficient government was impossible unless at its head was a responsible leader. "Nobody stands sponsor for the policy of the government," he writes. "A dozen men originate it; a dozen compromises twist and alter it; a dozen offices whose names are scarcely known outside of Washington put it into execution." How was this disintegration which destroyed responsibility to be corrected and the government again to become integrated and responsibility centered? Mr. Wilson had always been, and remains to-day, a strong Hamiltonian. In a political system so peculiar as that of the United States, clearly the one person who was intended to have both power and responsibility, who should have not only the right to plan but also the duty to execute, was the President.

But of this power he had been robbed, and he was now reduced to the level of a constitutional monarch who reigned but did not rule. Turning to England he saw there a system which made the Prime Minister the responsible executive, who originated and carried out a policy, while in America, in normal times, although theoretically the President had the authority of the sovereign and his ministry, the Presi-

dency, to use his own words, "is too silent and inactive, too little a premiership and too much like a superintendency", and Congress had the power that under a constitutional form of government was the prerogative of the ministry. It was not repugnant, in his opinion, to democratic ideas to make Congress the fountain-head of authority, even if it were a perversion of the intent of the framers of the Constitution, provided Congress in assuming authority also accepted responsibility; the power, in short, that did not place in separate hands "the right to plan from the duty to execute"; but what to him was vicious and made coherent government impossible was power so minutely divided that responsibility for its exercise could never be placed.

The Government of England is the Prime Minister, who is not only the real Executive but is also the head of his political party, and he remains the Executive and retains his political primacy so long as he has the support of his party and the country. His function is to originate policies and to carry them out through his majority in parliament, to coördinate and direct the work of his associates; for their ability and efficiency he is responsible; he is the final authority. Mr. Wilson believed that the President ought properly to occupy the same relation to the country and his party; that the President must be invested with the same power to carry out legislative policies that the president of a business corporation has to supervise

its affairs; that under a system of government responsive to the will of the people statesmanship cannot be dissociated from party; and in language so direct that it admits of no misinterpretation he gave expression to this belief long before there was the slightest thought in the public mind that he would be called to the Presidency.

He did not propose to go outside of the Constitution or to take any liberties with the charter; the restrictions imposed upon the President would be scrupulously observed, but as he read the Constitution and peered into the thoughts of the men who made it, he was able to convince himself that they intended one thing and circumstances made another. "The President of the United States," Mr. Wilson writes in "Constitutional Government in the United States", was "intended by the makers of the Constitution to be a reformed and standardized king, after the Whig model; and Congress was meant to be a reformed and properly regulated Parliament." So much for intention, "but both President and Congress have broken from the model and adapted themselves to circumstances, after a thoroughly American fashion — partly because the King and Parliament which the convention of 1787 intended to copy, with modifications, had no real existence and were therefore largely theoretical." And when theory that had no existence in fact was succeeded by fact that would not yield to theory President and Congress "were sure to undergo rapid

alteration in one direction or another, and each has taken its own course of change. It would be difficult now to believe that the American President and the English King, the American Congress and the English Parliament, were originally of the same model and intention if we did not clearly recollect the fact to be so."

He had seen the weakness of a political system that was the creature of accident rather than design and stressed it. "This is the defect to which I am constantly recurring," he writes in "Congressional Government", and that defect was that "nobody stands sponsor for the policy of the government." Years of reflection had not modified this judgment. "The whole art of statesmanship," he wrote in 1907 in "Constitutional Government", "is the art of bringing the several parts of government into effective cooperation for the accomplishment of particular common objects, — and party objects at that." Here Mr. Wilson has, in a few words, given us his political creed. The remedy, in a word, for what he complained of was responsible party leadership. The American Presidency should cease to be merely a superintendency and become a premiership.

3

We have only to examine his writings to see how much Mr. Wilson deprecated the obscurity into which the Presidency had fallen and how firm his conviction

that the President must not be merely the signer of laws but also the maker of them, acting through his party in Congress as the British Prime Minister does; that efficient government was impossible unless at its head was a responsible leader, and in America that leader must be the President. From 1865 to 1896, he writes in "Constitutional Government", "no President except Mr. Cleveland played a leading and decisive part in the quiet drama of our national life. Even Mr. Cleveland may be said to have owed his great rôle in affairs rather to his own native force and the confused politics of the time, than to any opportunity of leadership naturally afforded him by a system which had subordinated so many Presidents before him to Congress." Always that, always a system inherently vicious that subordinated the President to Congress; always, it is easy to see, the longing that a man with force and many-sided character would arise to destroy the system and again enthrone the President supreme. Did Mr. Wilson, while writing as a philosopher, publish his political creed and see in himself the leader he waited for? We cannot tell, but it is more than remarkable that to him should have come the opportunity to destroy the system that he so vigorously condemned.

But while Mr. Wilson saw the Presidency reduced from its former high estate he also saw that given the right man, a man of force, character and devotion, the office could be restored to what he believed it ought

to be; that, contrary to general belief, it was not the office that made its incumbent great, but the incumbent who had it in his power to shed luster upon the office; which perhaps explains why the Presidency has seemed so small when it was in the temporary occupation of some of the Presidents. Read what Mr. Wilson has written and then see what he has done, and it is as if writing always with the calm air of philosophical detachment he is saying for all men to hear: "This is the portrait of the perfect President; this is the President I shall be when I am given the opportunity." Not once but a dozen times we are given this insight. "The President is at liberty, both in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can," he says, showing that neither the law nor his conscience sets any limit upon the President's greatness. "The personal force of the President is perfectly constitutional to any extent to which he chooses to exercise it," we are told. The secret of successful government is personality, an English writer has said, and assuredly few men have so peculiarly impressed their personality upon a government as Mr. Wilson. He knows the power of the President if only the President has in him the element of power. "He is the one person who can form opinion by his own direct influence and act upon the whole country at once;" and if he is "a great person" and great as an orator then "he has the ear of the nation as of course, and a great person may use such an advantage greatly." Mr. Wilson has

known how to use his advantage greatly. Let the President "once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him." Many other quotations might be given, but are not these enough to prove that Mr. Wilson had clearly defined ideas of what the Presidency ought to be and that it could be made as great as the great person who held it?

Some of Mr. Wilson's predecessors have believed that the President may with propriety recommend to Congress such measures as he deems expedient — as the Constitution specifically requires him to do — and thus through Congress advise the country, but he may not without being guilty of impropriety attempt to lead; to do so would be misfeasance, which would properly merit the rebuke of Congress and the resentment of the country. That is not the view Mr. Wilson takes, to whom the Presidency is more than a disembodied voice; nor has he any fear that the country resents the leadership of the President, but, on the contrary, he is convinced the country welcomes it and looks to the President for inspiration and guidance. The people, he says, "have again and again, as often as they were afforded the opportunity, manifested their satisfaction when he has boldly accepted the rôle of leader, to which the peculiar origin and character of his authority entitle him. The Constitution bids him speak, and times of stress and change must more and more thrust upon him the attitude of originator of policies."

And it is that, "the originator of policies", the leader of his party, in other words, the President as Premier, that Mr. Wilson conceives to be the real function of the President. He is, it is true, the Executive; he becomes such when he takes the oath of office, as the Prime Minister of England is nominally "one of the King's servants", but the President is more than a mere executive, as the Prime Minister is greater even than the servant of a king. Nor is it necessary that the President shall attempt to hide his leadership as some Presidents have done, or exercise it furtively, or deny it while still exercising it. Mr. Wilson, of course, is not the first President to assert that by virtue of his office he is the political head of his party, but this hegemony has not been stressed for reasons that are a curious mixture of hypocrisy and virtue. The public knows that the President is a party man and a politician and has the interests of his party at heart, yet the public would like to believe that elevation to the Presidency has exalted him, that it has purified him, and the politician of yesterday, who is to-day the President, has risen above the petty affairs of party and has ceased to think of politics. Mr. Wilson would have the President boldly avow his leadership; more than that, Mr. Wilson sees that it cannot be disguised because it is self-evident and manifest. It is becoming more and more true, he says, "as the business of the government becomes more and more complex and extended, that

the President is becoming more and more a political and less and less an executive officer. His executive powers are in commission, while his political powers more and more center and accumulate upon him and are in their very nature personal and inalienable." The duty of a statesman, Mr. Wilson asserts, is to "give the Government its best force and synthesis", and "no one can play the leading part in such a matter with more influence or propriety than the President. If he have character, modesty, devotion and insight, as well as force, he can bring the contending elements of the system together into a great and efficient body of common counsel."

4

Congress may try to subordinate the President, and there have been times when the President has been compelled to yield to Congress, but in certain emergencies the nature of his office will make the weakest President more powerful than the most imperious Congress. The direction of foreign affairs being solely intrusted to the President he can bend Congress to his submission. Mr. Wilson, lifting the veil, saw the dominant position the President must occupy in a great international crisis involving the United States or a war in which the United States was engaged. In the preface to the fifteenth edition of "Congressional Government", published in 1900, he writes:

"When foreign affairs play a prominent part in the

politics and policies of a nation, its Executive must of necessity be its guide; must utter every initial judgment, take every first step of action, supply the information upon which it is to act, suggest and in a large measure control its conduct." This, it will be recalled, was written after the close of war with Spain, and the effect of that war upon America led Mr. Wilson to say: "The President of the United States is now, as of course, at the front of affairs, as no President, except Lincoln, has been since the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the foreign relations of the new nation had first to be adjusted. There is no trouble now about getting the President's speeches printed and read, every word. Upon his choice, his character, his experience hang some of the most weighty issues of the future. The government of dependencies must be largely in his hands. Interesting things may come out of the change." He saw one of the things to come out of the change, for in "Constitutional Government" a few years later he said:

"Our President must always, henceforth, be one of the great powers of the world, whether he act greatly or wisely or not, and the best statesman we can produce will be needed to fill the office of Secretary of State. We have but begun to see the presidential office in this light; but it is the light which will more and more beat upon it, and more and more determine its character and its effect upon the politics of the nation. We can never hide our President again as

a mere domestic officer. We can never again see him the mere executive he was in the thirties and forties. He must stand always at the front of our affairs, and the office will be as big and as influential as the man who occupies it."

There again the reference to the man making the Presidency and not the Presidency making the man. That thought was ever uppermost in Mr. Wilson's mind, and it is certain no man ever came to the Presidency who was less awed by it than he. Most Presidents, as we gather from their correspondence and biographers, in their humility, a humility perhaps sometimes assumed as becomes the humble servant of the people, were fearful because they were so insignificant and the office was so vast; to Mr. Wilson it never assumed the aspect of a tyrant. It did not terrify him because it was a giant only in imagination. The wand was in his hands. As he willed, the Presidency had the stature and strength of a giant, of whom he was always the master, or shrank into the insignificance of a dwarf.

5

Believing that the correct function of the President in the American political system was not alone that of the political executive corresponding to the British Prime Minister, whose power is derived from his party and clothes him with responsible authority, it naturally follows that Mr. Wilson should also regard the Presi-

dent as the leader of his party. The whole art of statesmanship, he declared, as we have already noted, "is the art of bringing the several parts of the government into effective coöperation for the accomplishment of particular common objects, — and party objects at that." In other words, Mr. Wilson is a stout party man, and because he believes in parties as necessary to representative government he has often been charged with "playing politics." The accusation is both true and false. If it is to be understood in its common acceptance, if it is meant to imply that for the sake of mere partisan advantage Mr. Wilson is willing to sacrifice principle or to resort to unworthy methods to embarrass his political opponents, the charge does him an injustice; but it is perfectly true that Mr. Wilson, being a Democrat, believes that the government can be best administered by Democrats and that political rewards properly belong to Democrats, who are entitled to the first consideration for the sake of the party. Mr. Wilson has frankly said so, and with equal frankness he has shown that it is possible for a man to be a politician as well as a statesman, and while a statesman is a term of respect a politician need not necessarily be a reproach.

In England, party leaders, Mr. Wilson writes in "Constitutional Government", are "interchangeably 'politicians' and 'statesmen'", while in America "the distinction we make between 'politicians' and 'statesmen' is peculiarly our own." In other countries

"where the words or their equivalents are used, the statesman differs from the politician only in capacity and in degree, and is distinguished as a public leader only in being a greater figure on the same stage, whereas with us politicians and statesmen differ in kind." He explains that the politician "is a man who manages the organs of the party outside the open field of government", while the statesman "is the leader of public opinion, the immediate director (under the politicians) of executive or legislative policy, the diplomat, the recognized public servant"; but clearly, in the better sense, it is possible for a man to be both politician and statesman, and evidently Mr. Wilson would not regard it as offensive to be called a politician. Because a man is the President it does not debar him being the political manager of his party. "The President may also, if he will," Mr. Wilson declares, "stand within the party councils and use the advantage of his power and personal force to control its actual programs. He may be both the leader of his party and the leader of the nation, or he may be one or the other. If he lead the nation, his party can hardly resist him. His office is anything he has the sagacity and force to make it."

Here, once more, Mr. Wilson gives utterance to his dominant thought: it is the man who makes the office great, and not the office that can make a little man great.

One may be sure that given the opportunity to make the Presidency what he believed it ought to be,

his inflexible will and purpose would force Congress no less than the country to recognize in him not only the leader of his party in the parliamentary sense but also the leader of the nation; that he was responsible for its policies, that his duty, as he conceived it, was first to plan and then to execute, that if he achieved success or met with failure he, and he alone, was entitled to be given credit in the one case or condemned in the other.

Mr. Wilson must have wanted his position known, he must have known, having spent all his life watching minds at work, that no matter how often a man says the same thing in a dynamic age it will attract little attention unless he can create a dramatic background and spectacular surroundings. And what more dramatic background can a man ask than the Presidency of the United States! It was not without a spice of gentle malice with just sufficient sting to prick and not draw blood, that in Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, 1912, a few weeks after his election, he said that people were now seeing "that in view of the things that I have said since I was nominated, which are exactly the same things I have said before I was nominated, they are no longer afraid of me. By which I draw this simple conclusion, that they did not read the things that I said before I was nominated, and that after I was nominated it became worth their while really to find out what I did actually say."

Mr. Wilson took early occasion to say to the country what he felt his position to be. Addressing Congress on June 23, 1913, only a little more than three months after his inauguration, urging the passage of a law to reform the banking and currency system, he said: "I have come to you as the head of the Government and the responsible leader of the party in power." It was somewhat of a shock to the public to hear the President boldly proclaim himself the leader of his party and its political chieftain; it sounded curiously to American ears, accustomed as they had been for long years to listening to the President subscribing to a self-denying ordnance renouncing politics when he came to the Presidency and in the voice of the miserable sinner penitently declaring himself to be a lowly follower and the devoted servant of the people.

It was so startling, this assertion of leadership and political primacy that it provoked discussion in the press. "Is the President by virtue of his office the leader of the American people?" one newspaper asked, and it proceeded to ascertain the facts. It conceded that in respect to legislation he undoubtedly is, for he is required by the Constitution to make recommendations to Congress, but having done that his duties and responsibilities end. Having made his recommendation, Congress, a coördinate body, over which the President has no power of coercion or control, may accept or reject his recommendation as it sees fit. It was not intended that the President should be a leader;

his true function is to be an adviser, and he must submit gracefully when Congress, in the exercise of its wisdom, rejects his advice. It is not necessary to pursue the subject further, but it shows how little prepared the country was to accept the doctrine of the Presidency being a premiership, and how little it understood Mr. Wilson.

In the following month he again proclaimed his leadership. On the fourth of July, speaking at Gettysburg, he said: "I have been chosen the leader of the nation." It was a banal statement of an obvious fact that needed no enunciation if he meant simply to inform his audience that he was the titular head of the nation, but we may be sure he had a deeper purpose and that deliberately he sought to impress upon the country his actual as well as his titular leadership. But to the country the words passed without meaning.

Mr. Wilson has shown himself to be the "practical politician" by not underestimating the value and importance to be attached to the local offices. Politics begins at the bottom, by exciting the enthusiasm and even the selfishness of the great mass of electors, many of whom are "party workers" and look for party rewards. Mr. Wilson recognizes this as not only natural but praiseworthy. "Local offices," he says in "Constitutional Government", "are indispensable to party discipline as rewards of local fidelity, as the visible and tangible objects of those who devote their time and energy to party organization and under-

take to see to it that the full strength of the party vote is put forth when the several sections of the party are called upon to unite for national purposes." While not a machine politician he is still a believer in the party machine, without which the party could not exist. "Whatever their faults and abuses," he holds, "party machines are absolutely necessary under our existing electoral arrangements, and are necessary chiefly for keeping the several segments of parties together. No party manager could piece local majorities together and make up a national majority, if local majorities were mustered upon non-partisan grounds. No party manager can keep his lieutenants to their business who has not control of local nominations."

6

A biographer must set forth if he can the materials for the severest judgment on his subject, is the dictum of Lord Charnwood, one of the most delightful of modern biographers, whose severity is tempered by the admiration he so frankly expresses for Lincoln. Governed by that principle, the interpreter of Mr. Wilson, desiring to do him only justice but mindful of the honesty he owes to himself, will regret that Mr. Wilson frequently permitted his zeal for party to do what at times seemed to be the extreme of narrow partisanship and lowered the dignity of his great office. He would undoubtedly have silenced criticism had he at the outbreak of the war reformed his Cabinet and

brought to his side one or two of the foremost men in the Republican party, and doing at once what circumstances compelled him to do later, appointing Republicans to offices created by the exigencies of the war; and furthermore, in abstaining from using his influence to promote the election to Congress of men for party reasons. The future historian will undoubtedly see in these things a weakness in an otherwise strong character, too much thought given to politics when matters of greater moment should have engrossed attention. But it must not be forgotten that Mr. Wilson believed, and had not hesitated to say, that government could be carried on only by parties and not through coalition; the Anglo-Saxon has a peculiar dislike of coalition governments; they are as unpopular in England as they are in America, and they have been resorted to only in times of the greatest emergency. One of Mr. Wilson's objections to government by Congressional Committee, as he points out in "Congressional Government", is that the diluted responsibility of the Committee is still further attenuated by every Committee having a minority representation; and he contrasts that unfavorably with the English system, where the Cabinet represents only the majority and the minority is deprived of all voice, for the time being, in the management of the Government.

Mr. Wilson's refusal to dismiss members of his Cabinet or other officials who incurred the displeasure

of the public was put down to excessive stubbornness, to a vanity that refused to acknowledge a mistake, to an exaggerated belief in his own inerrancy that would be childish were it not based on more solid foundation; it was frequently explained and defended by his friends, who asserted Mr. Wilson was better able to know the capacity and qualifications of an official than the public, misled by partisan attack or well-meaning but mistaken zeal; but neither defense nor explanation satisfied the public, which, demanding a particular head on a charger, was not to be appeased by being told the day of execution was indefinitely postponed.

Yet Mr. Wilson's course, holding the views he does, was entirely logical and not merely the exercise of arbitrary power or the desire of a man obstinately weak determined to show his strength. On the theory of the Presidency being a premiership and the application of that theory to the principle of the office, the principle that in England makes the Prime Minister responsible for the acts of his appointees and their subordinates and in America would vest the President with equal responsibility, the dismissal of an official in response to public clamor was impossible because it implied, and by acquiescence the President admitted, a want of confidence in the Administration and an interference with the prerogatives of the President. In England it is always possible to test public sentiment by bringing on an adverse vote in the House of Commons, which the Prime Minister may chal-

lenge or defy, but he knows his risk and that his resignation must follow as a matter of course in case of defeat. In America the machinery is more complicated and functions with less celerity; the people can express their confidence in the Administration or withhold it by defeating the party of the Administration at the mid-term Congressional elections, or by electing the President if he is a candidate for reëlection, or defeating his party, if he does not aspire to be his own successor; but as in England, the President knows his risk and knows the penalty he must pay whenever he forfeits the confidence of the country.

Entirely consistent, Mr. Wilson, in the summer of 1918, opposed the reëlection of those members of Congress who had opposed his measures or policies, on the ground that it was tantamount to a condemnation of his Administration. He resorted to no subterfuge in declaring his position. In a letter to a constituent of Senator Vardaman, of Mississippi, who was a candidate for reëlection, the President wrote:

"Senator Vardaman has been conspicuous among the Democrats of the Senate for his opposition to the Administration. If the voters of Mississippi should again choose him to represent them, I not only have no right to object — I would have no right in any way to criticize them, but I should be obliged to accept their action as a condemnation of my Administration, and it is only right that they should know this before they act."

In brief, then, if the Presidency is a premiership, it is not the prerogative of the country to dismiss an official, except the one responsible for all, the President; but it is the prerogative of the President to dismiss any man who no longer satisfies him or who has failed to meet a certain standard; and the President has exercised his prerogative more frequently than the public is generally aware. The resignation of a member of the Cabinet — "resignation" is the official euphemism for dismissal — is always made sensational because the public pictures a "scene" between two strong and passionate men, perhaps excited charges of bad faith, of disloyalty, of overweening ambition — the possibilities are endless to imagination; and no less sensational is it when officials are unable to work in harmony, when recrimination is bandied about, and for the good of the service one, and sometimes both, must be dismissed. Of the men below Cabinet rank who have been allowed quietly to retire because they did not measure up to expectations or created friction the public has heard nothing, because Mr. Wilson does not believe that mere administrative details are properly reviewable at the bar of public opinion.

7

Whether Mr. Wilson's theory of the responsibilities and duties of the Presidency is correct, whether the framers of the Constitution intended that the President should be a Premier rather than an Executive

permitted to plan but denied the power to execute, whether a system that satisfies the requirements of British politics can be safely applied to American, in the one case the Premier holding office at the pleasure of the people while in the other the President's tenure is fixed and he can be removed only by impeachment — into these considerations it is unnecessary to enter. Their discussion would be proper in a polemical work dealing with opposing schools of government and constitutional interpretation, but they have no place in an attempt to interpret the character, motives and guiding principles of Woodrow Wilson. Two things, however, must be made clear to save the reader from confusion. It has already been said that in everything Mr. Wilson wrote as a student, when his discussion of the presidential powers was academic, and everything he has done since coming to the Presidency has been without wrench to the Constitution. He has made no attempt to stretch the Constitution to meet his own views; he has not transcended the constitutional boundaries surrounding the Executive, or invaded the province of the Legislature or the Judiciary as defined by the Constitution. This cannot be overemphasized.

And while frequent reference has been made to Mr. Wilson's belief that the British parliamentary system is superior to the American system of Congressional government, this must not lead the reader to think that Mr. Wilson saw a merit in monarchical institu-

tions to the disparagement of republican. It was not the monarchical institutions of England that commended themselves to him, but the system of popular government; and above all, the system of integration by which one man, the Prime Minister, was made responsible for all that was done, instead of the disintegrating effect of numerous Congressional Committees that enabled every man to escape his just responsibility.

Mr. Wilson had subjected the political systems of the two English-speaking peoples to the laboratory test. He had weighed, analyzed, measured, and the reaction had met the test of his theoretic formula. Long ago he had set up a model in his workshop, now he was to determine whether his ideas were sound or like the dream of the visionary inventor, theoretically sound but practically impossible. The man who at twenty-three saw the advantage of a system that created a Prime Minister as compared with the disadvantage of a system that elected a President only to make him silent and inactive, was now, fortified by wisdom and experience, to come to his opportunity to make the Presidency what his reason and his conscience taught him it ought to be.

CHAPTER IV

The Enigma

1

Mr. Wilson matured early. At an age when character is in the formative stage and minds are plastic, his character had become fixed and his mind had reached almost its full development. Two striking incidents in his career before he reached thirty prove this — the publication of "Congressional Government" and the abandonment of the law for pedagogy. It is not an uncommon thing for men to begin life in one profession and after a decent interval forsake it for another vocation, but such men have usually been unstable, without industry, naturally fond of change, or the creature of circumstance beyond their control. None of these reasons influenced Mr. Wilson. He had given proof of his industry and tenacity, the love of reckless adventure was not in him, no sudden crisis had come into his life. Deliberately and with a detached point of view very remarkable he was able to appraise himself; he knew his own powers and limitations, the thing he was best fitted for and that his heart was in. Other men have drifted into the law or medicine, found it disappointing or disheartening, but, too timid to begin

anew, have plugged along to failure. Mr. Wilson had the courage to confess his mistake and to make a new start.

"Congressional Government", to any one seeking to understand and interpret Woodrow Wilson, will repay careful reading. It is seldom that a youth of twenty-three is the author of a work that lives and becomes a classic, which in itself is sufficient to stamp him as a man of whom much may be expected, but the book is of still greater interest. Neither in style nor treatment does it betray youth, its inexperience, passions or prejudices. There is about it the sure touch of the philosophical observer, who having reasoned carefully and weighed dispassionately has reached the certain ground of conviction. The confidence Mr. Wilson had in his youth grew and strengthened with his years. The characters of few public men have so often been summed up in a single word, to no other public man perhaps have so many men of diverse intellects applied the same word as a characterization. Mr. Wilson's friends have said with an air of regret, as if recognizing an immedicable weakness, as his opponents have said with an air of finality, that he is too "self-centered." What they mean is that he was always sure of himself, that in him there were no doubts or hesitations such as mark the ordinary man, nor did he carefully balance with timidity the danger of action against the safety of compromise. To a friend who congratulated him on his judgment having been vin-

dicated, although at the time his course was unpopular, Mr. Wilson replied: "I always try to keep my imagination ahead of the facts." Imagination is as priceless a gift to the statesman as it is to the poet, but the poet does not need to curb his fancy with facts.

As the twig is bent the tree inclines, and the early bent of Mr. Wilson's mind is palpable. In "Congressional Government" there is the same clear presentation of facts, the same terseness and lucidity that distinguish Mr. Wilson's later writings and make them, now that he has the whole world for audience, as full of meaning to foreigners as his own people, and as clear to the ignorant as to the lettered.

The confidence Mr. Wilson has always had in the correctness of his own judgment since he entered public life, and especially since he became President, is clearly foreshadowed in his book. It would be conceit were it not wisdom, and time has proved the answer. He resorts to no doubts or qualifications, he does not nicely trim to escape responsibility, nor seek to evade for fear he is walking on unknown ground. He walks boldly because he feels the ground firm beneath him; having sifted through his mind facts which develop their own conclusions he is sure of himself. The style is the man, we have so often been told, and certainly few men have so revealed themselves by their style as he. The style as well as the man was formed when of the experience of life he knew little except what he had learned from himself. Experience and practice have

given Mr. Wilson a greater command of his art, a more rhythmical use of words, and, under the stress of emotion and since he has been addressing the world, he has not scrupled to let the world see the emotions that move him; but a close student of "Congressional Government" and the state papers of the President must see that they are from the same hand. The identity is there, it extends to the dominating thought as well as the idiosyncrasies of style from which no writer escapes.

Mr. Wilson's literary critics have been pained by his excessive fondness for the adjective "very" and have pointed out to him that the modification of a noun does not make for strength and is the one blemish on a style nearly perfect; but Mr. Wilson, in that respect perhaps as perverse as one of his former pupils, disdains the voice of counsel and persists in his literary sin. So early was this habit formed that the seventh word of "Congressional Government" is the "very" now so familiar in the later addresses and state papers; so wedded is Mr. Wilson to his adjective that he goes out of his way to marry it to an adverb rather than forsake it. In the preface to the fifteenth edition to "Congressional Government", written in 1900, Mr. Wilson cannot resist the temptation of "very absolutely." This idiosyncrasy, and every writer has it — Conrad, for instance, perhaps the greatest master of English in our day, seemingly is unable to write a book without the frequent use of "certitude", a word few modern

writers use — would not be worth mentioning were it not proof that Mr. Wilson has broadened with the years, but he has not changed.

Indisputable evidence that President Wilson thinks now as the student of twenty-three thought is to be found in "Congressional Government", and it is evidence no less interesting to literature than it is to psychology. In "Congressional Government" Mr. Wilson wrote: "There are voices in the air which cannot be misunderstood." Addressing Congress on January 8, 1918, he elaborated the same figure: "There is, moreover, a voice calling for these definitions of principle and of purpose which is, it seems to me, more thrilling and more compelling than any of the moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people." In the preface to the fifteenth edition of "Congressional Government", Mr. Wilson wrote that its translation into French had caused him for the first time since its publication to read it, and it is doubtful if from that day to this he had occasion to look into its pages, yet eighteen years later we find him unconsciously using the thought of his youth. That he should use it does not imply poverty of imagination, what he had written must long since have been forgotten, but while the words were effaced the conviction was indelibly graven. All his life he had heard the voices in the air. While others were deaf he had listened to their message and understood. It explains much.

2

Mr. Cleveland was the first Democratic President to be elected since the close of the Civil War, and sixteen years must elapse before another Democrat was to occupy the curule chair. The Democrats had been handicapped by their slavish adherence to the past, their exaggerated veneration for wise men long dead, who because of their wisdom would have adjusted themselves to modern conditions instead of obstinately resisting them. It was frequently said of the Democratic party that like a fine old family gone to seed, all that was good was underground, while its descendants lived on tradition and withered. It was this ancestor worship, this clinging to outworn formulas, the mathematical splitting of constitutional hairs, that made the country distrust the capacity of the Democratic party for leadership and its inability and unwillingness to keep pace with social development.

Mr. Wilson was a Democrat by birth, environment and conviction; born in the South and nurtured on the political principles of his section he held in veneration the great Democrats who had shaped the political thought of the young Republic, but his days were not spent in adoration of the dead or his nights in silent meditation at the tomb. In the book which is no less a confession of faith than it is an aspiration, to which frequent reference has been made, "Congressional Government", he shows how clear his vision is of the future, he foresees the inevitable trend of political

sociology, and Democrat though he is the fear that the hallowed dead may uneasily turn in their coffins does not affright him.

"Unquestionably, the pressing problems of the present moment," he writes, "regard the regulation of our vast systems of commerce and manufacture, the control of giant corporations, the restraint of monopolies, the perfection of fiscal arrangements, the facilitating of economic exchanges, and many other like national concerns, amongst which may possibly be numbered the question of marriage and divorce; and the greatest of these problems do not fall within even the enlarged sphere of the Federal Government; some of them can be embraced within its jurisdiction by no possible stretch of construction, and the majority of them only by wresting the Constitution to strange and as yet unimagined uses. Still there is a distinct movement in favor of national control of all questions of policy which manifestly demand uniformity of treatment and power of administration such as cannot be realized by the separate, unconcerted action of the States; and it seems probable to many that, whether by constitutional amendment, or by still further flights of construction yet broader, they will at no very distant day be assigned to the Federal Government."

Later he gave evidence that he had no sympathy with those Democratic pundits whose over-refinement of scruple made them the protectors of the Constitution at the expense of the people. In "Constitutional

Government" he says: "While we were once all constitutional lawyers, we are in these latter days apt to be very impatient of literal and dogmatic interpretations of constitutional principle"; and again in the same book: "The Constitution of the United States is not a mere lawyer's document: it is a vehicle of life, and its spirit is always the spirit of the age. . . . Life is always your last and most authoritative critic."

Nor did he subscribe to the sanctity which must attach to the unwritten law of the Constitution. Mr. Wilson delivered his first message to Congress in person instead of communicating it in writing, which was the custom followed by his predecessors for a hundred years. To the public it was an innovation, and startling, typical of the contempt Mr. Wilson had shown for other outworn customs; so revolutionary almost that the public questioned whether he had not done something that was in violation of the Constitution or at least the law; and while some of the close students of history recalled that he had merely patterned after the first two Presidents, Mr. Wilson vouchsafed neither explanation nor excuse. Yet the student of Mr. Wilson's works might have known that, secure in the confidence of his own power over an audience and the greater impression he could make, he would elect to speak in person rather than through the mouth of a clerk.

Prior to the accession of George I, the King of England attended the meetings of the Cabinet, but George, being a Hanoverian, who could not speak English, and

his Ministers not understanding German, he remained away, and from that day to this no English sovereign has been present at a Cabinet council. Citing this to show how custom creates law Mr. Wilson writes in "The State":

"A similar example of the interesting cases with which men of our race establish and observe precedents is to be found in the practice on the part of Presidents of the United States sending written messages to Congress. Washington and John Adams addressed Congress in person on public affairs; but Jefferson, the third President, was not an easy speaker, and preferred to send a written message. Subsequent Presidents followed his example as of course. Hence a sacred rule of constitutional action!"

3

In New Jersey first and in Washington later, Mr. Wilson was an enigma to those about him, whose business it was to try to understand him. He eluded them. He presented the paradox of a man who neither hectored nor threatened, who did not use the bribe of patronage or the appeal to party discipline, who was fairly accessible and had a personal charm and magnetism that was winning, and yet who had the reputation of holding himself aloof, of being too coldly intellectual to be human, who cared as little for companionship as he valued counsel, who had a contempt for politics and was the most successful politician of his

generation. In a speech delivered at Staunton, Virginia, in December following his election, he had said that "a man can keep his manners and still fight. The nice thrust of the sword that is delivered with a smile is more discouraging than the thrust that is delivered with a scowl." More than one man had met this nice thrust delivered with a sure hand and a smile, but it did not lighten the victim's pain.

Then, and to forestall the next few years, he gave birth to no myth; no legend or stories clustered about him. In Washington so little divinity does hedge the President, so little removed is he from the men who share with him the government, that the President's philosophy or witticisms or satire are tossed lightly about; but no one repeated what Mr. Wilson said to him or what he said to Mr. Wilson that brought the flashing reply. He remained as remote as a cloistered monk; to the great mass of the American people, paying deference to him as their secular leader, he was as inscrutable, as passionless almost, as the pontiff of their spiritual allegiance. The men brought close to him in an official relation transact their business and leave, but they carry away no atmosphere, no personal touch; never is the baffling mask removed. Between him and the people of direct contact there is none. The contrast with former Presidents, freely accessible, shaking hands with the curious but vitally interested, is striking, extraordinarily so when one recalls Lincoln during the darkest days of the Civil War, of whom it

has been said: "Literally crowds of people from all parts of the North saw him, exchanged a sentence or two, and carried home their impressions."

A strange and complex character, too subtle to be plumbed by little minds, too unlike the traditional concept of the President for the public to understand him any better than did the politicians, who without understanding had a vague feeling of disquiet that here was their master, that in any conflict between him and them they would be worsted.

Yet the riddle might not have been so difficult to read had more study been given to the man as he revealed himself by his writings. In "Congressional Government" he said:

"The best rulers are always those to whom great power is intrusted in such a manner as to make them feel that they will surely be abundantly honored and recompensed for a just and patriotic use of it, and to make them know that nothing can shield them from full retribution for every abuse of it."

In an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1897, on "Mr. Cleveland as President", he had written that to make a good President "a certain tough and stubborn fiber is necessary, which does not easily change, which is unelastically strong"; and one could not better sum up the character of Woodrow Wilson than to say he has a certain tough and stubborn fiber, not easily to be changed, and unelastically strong. In the same year, on August 3, addressing the Virginia State

Bar Association at Hot Springs, Virginia, he described in a few words the secret of successful government in a great crisis, such as later he was to know, when he said: "Successful governments have never been conducted safely in the midst of complex and critical affairs except when guided by those who were responsible for carrying out and bringing to an issue great measures they proposed; and the separation of the right to plan from the duty to execute has always led to blundering and inefficiency." No man has been more severely condemned than Mr. Wilson for refusing to share his powers, but long before he was intrusted with power, when he had only his theoretical knowledge to guide him, he was able to see the danger that menaced and the confusion that would follow if the mind that planned was not also the hand to execute.

It is worth incorporating here Mr. Wilson's pen picture of the great leader, which has more than an impersonal interest when it is recalled how in his student days at Johns Hopkins he prepared himself for public oratory by a close study of the great English parliamentarians. In "Congressional Government", in one of the few passages in which he gives his fancy play and splashes color on his palette, he tells of the power of oratory in Congress and says, "Men may be clever and engaging speakers, such as are to be found, doubtless, at half the bars of the country, without being equipped even tolerably for any of the high duties of the statesman; but men can scarcely be orators without that

force of character, that readiness of resource, that clearness of vision, that grasp of intellect, that courage of conviction, that earnestness of purpose, and that instinct and capacity for leadership which are the eight horses that draw the triumphal chariot of every leader and ruler of free men."

It was the bitter complaint of members of Congress and their satellite politicians, and to some extent it was shared by the country, that the new President was a more masterful and obstinate man than any of his predecessors, with perhaps the exception of Jackson, whose historical reputation they accepted without investigation and with whom he was often compared; but the comparison with Lincoln is more appropriate, as we shall see, although there could not be two men, in many things, more unlike. Lincoln was a man of infinite patience, of consummate political shrewdness, of unyielding tenacity; he touched emotion with the magic harp of speech; he made war in a holy cause and brought an unwilling people to welcome sacrifice in the name of humanity. The parallel could not be the more exact.

In some way which no one could explain but every one had to acknowledge, Mr. Wilson had seized power so completely that his own party in Congress had become merely a council to register his decrees, and the opposition performed no other function but that of muttering in futile rage. It was neither overwhelming ambition nor the selfish vanity of power that made

Mr. Wilson play this part. He brought to the Presidency new ideas and new methods; the Presidency was to cease to be merely a superintendency and to become a premiership. It is amusing now as we look back, and it will afford much material for the future historian, that a great parliamentary revolution was in progress, and no one suspected it, and only one man knew it. A system that had come into existence by chance rather than design, that Congress after Congress had perpetuated, Mr. Wilson had determined to destroy, did begin to destroy from the first day he entered the White House, had struck at its foundation in the early months of his power, and soon was to see it crumble and leveled in the dust. More than one President had tried to do and failed what Mr. Wilson succeeded in accomplishing. Congress, jealous of its usurped powers and unwilling to yield them, resisted any attempt on the part of the President to regain his stolen inheritance, and the struggle ended either in the presidential surrender or a break between the President and his party in Congress, which was the fate of Mr. Cleveland, also a masterful man. Lincoln narrowly escaped the same fate. It was the same clash between a President determined to assert leadership and a Congress no less determined to keep the President subordinate. "This was an able, energetic, and truly patriotic Congress," says one of Lincoln's biographers, "and must not be despised for its reluctance to be guided by Lincoln. But it was reluctant."

Congress went its way unsuspecting, and Mr. Wilson worked. Like the Congress of Lincoln's day "they grumbled and sneered"; just as their predecessors complained that before they could legislate they had to "ascertain the Royal pleasure", so now they denounced the man who had made them "rubber stamps", who called no party leaders in conference, who showed no fear of Congress and treated it with little deference, but who sent his measures down to Congress with the calm assurance they would be enacted into laws. Every other President coming into office has been swamped with office seekers, with senators and representatives acting as office brokers for their constituents; and Presidents have not considered that it lowered their dignity to haggle over offices in return for promises of legislative support, while members of Congress have considered it part of their power to remind the President that unless they were given the offices they sought for their clients he might expect opposition when he submitted his legislative program for action.

Mr. Wilson gave little of his time to office brokerage. He had avowed himself a party man; statesmanship, he had recorded, was the accomplishment of party objects; but his imagination was too vivid and his principles were too firmly established to resort to the cheap trick of buying strength by the sale of offices. The Democratic party was in power and Democrats were naturally to be given preferment, but the days of Walpole were gone.

CHAPTER V

A Pledge to Humanity

1

The policies of an administration are broadly foreshadowed by the "platform" adopted at the nominating convention on which the candidate for the Presidency stands; the candidate's speech of acceptance in reply to the formal notification of the committee appointed to inform him of his nomination; and his first official act as President, the announcement of the members of his Cabinet.

A political platform has no legal validity; it has neither the force of statute nor the moral obligation imposed upon an individual by his personal promise. It is the compromise of many conflicting elements, some of them governed by principle and others yielding to expediency, who are relieved from personal responsibility because their identity is lost in the mass. But a political platform is always to be regarded as the expression of benevolent intention, of what the representatives of the people would like to do, and perhaps intend to do if under the heat of emotion their enthusiasm has not carried them too far; and it perhaps more nearly typifies than any other document the be-

lief men have at the moment of the things their fellow men are thinking, their desires and unsatisfied longings; and puts in concrete form so as to make the strongest appeal the crude ideas of the multitude.

The Democratic platform of 1912 was in harmony with the new thoughts that were moving men and the aspirations that made them see in a purified politics a regenerative force. The tariff, according to Democratic belief, had been perverted from its original purpose of providing for the necessary support of the government and been made an instrument of oppression and the means of intrenching monopoly, therefore it was natural for the convention to demand that taxes should be sufficient only for "the necessities of government honestly and economically administered"; that the trusts and their beneficiaries should be vigorously denounced; that every movement in the direction of social reform, equality and justice, such as the income tax, the election of senators by the people, the publicity of campaign contributions, the efficient control of railways, the improvement of agriculture and other measures for the general benefit should be strongly approved.

The platform of this year is noteworthy as showing the current of thought, how much men were thinking only of the things close to them, the things that were to bring sweetness to life and help to lift the burden — the severity of taxation, the high cost of living, the grasp of monopoly; and how little their thoughts turned to things remote from them: international rela-

tions or the affairs of other peoples, which could not in any way make for their own happiness or remedy the injustice of which they complained. The platform gives perfunctory approval to a navy "sufficient to defend American policies", but has no word to say of the army; it favors the exemption from tolls of American ships in the coastwise trade passing through the Panama Canal; it condemns "a policy of imperialism and colonial exploitation in the Philippines, or elsewhere" and favors the independence of the islands; and commends the action of Congress in having abrogated the Russian commercial treaty because of Russia's discrimination against American Jews. This is the election manifesto of a non-militaristic, anti-imperialistic party of social democracy and is in marked contrast to former years, when foreign affairs were an issue and parties must take firm ground or risk losing votes.

Thus in 1892 the Republican platform expressed its sympathy for home rule in Ireland; in 1896 the Democrats championed the people of Cuba "in their heroic struggle for liberty and independence"; and in the same year the Republicans gave prominence to foreign policy in "planks" too long to be quoted, but which were vigorous and defiant. In 1900 the Democrats gave more space to foreign affairs than their rivals. The Democratic platform breathed new life into the Monroe Doctrine, it condemned the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty "as a surrender of American rights and interests not

to be tolerated by the American people"; it was equally severe in disapproving the "ill concealed Republican alliance with England"; it "viewed with indignation the purpose of England to overwhelm with force the South African republics"; and, heartily opposing "militarism", avowed "this Republic has no place for a vast military service and conscription"; an interesting political reminiscence in view of a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress writing a conscription act on the statute books. In the Republican convention of that year were fewer fire-eaters than in the opposing camp, although the Republicans were equally zealous in proclaiming their undying faith in the Monroe Doctrine; they declared their belief in the principle of *civis Romanus sum* by asserting it was the duty of the American Government to protect its citizens wherever they were placed in peril; the foreign policy of the Administration in Samoa and Hawaii was approved, and hope expressed for a speedy termination of the Boer War. Further quotations are unnecessary, nor is it necessary minutely to inquire whether these platform references to foreign affairs were animated by principle or expediency. The purpose has been to show, and to prove, that in the past the relations of America with the rest of the world influenced political thought and action and had to be reckoned with by the leaders of both political parties.

The Republican platform of 1912 was not dissimilar to that of the Democrats in emphasizing "civil liberty

and the rights of men" and in pledging the party "to go forward with the solution of these new questions which social, economic and political development have brought into the forefront of the nation's interest"; but the Republicans give even less space than their opponents to foreign affairs. That international disputes may be settled by peaceful means and the adjudication of an international court of justice is a pious hope; approval is given to the action of Congress in terminating the Russian treaty, and there is a meaningless reference to the Philippines.

It was as a protest that the short-lived Progressive party came into existence that year, and its platform is that protest voiced: a "covenant with the people" to "forge a new instrument of government." Taking, as a matter of course, more advanced ground in social legislation than either of the older parties, the platform in a few lines dealt with only four international questions: the immediate repeal of the Canadian Reciprocity Act; freedom of the Panama Canal to American ships in the coastwise trade; an international agreement for the limitation of naval forces; the protection of the rights of American citizens.

It will thus be seen that foreign affairs were not in the American picture in the year 1912, and that domestic matters monopolized attention exclusively. It may be added here that in the campaign that followed there was scarcely a reference either by the candidates themselves, the other party chiefs or in the press to

foreign policies, with the sole exception of "dollar diplomacy", a term coined by the Democrats to show their reprobation of the support given by the Republican Administration to American commerce and finance in foreign countries, but especially in China and Latin America. "Dollar diplomacy", however, was never in any sense an issue of the campaign and was too remote to the masses either to interest them or to arouse their passion; it was used by the Democrats to throw odium on the Republicans and to strengthen the Democratic belief that the Republican party was a party of monopoly which used the government for its own benefit. In a word, "dollar diplomacy" was only another variant of tariff robbery and trust extortion.

2

Mr. Wilson was nominated in July, and on the seventh of August, in accordance with custom, he was notified of his nomination and delivered his speech of acceptance. This speech, some ten thousand words in length, is a reaffirmation, enlargement and interpretation of the platform. A platform, it has already been said, has no legal existence and is simply a moral obligation voluntarily assumed by the party, and by the candidate as a member of the party. The candidate's speech of acceptance is not only a vow of fealty to his party and the cause of which he has been constituted the leader, but a solemn affirmation that he accepts and considers himself morally bound to adhere to the

principles of his party as formulated in its platform.

Without reservation Mr. Wilson accepted the platform and showed the belief that was in him and his duty as he should execute it if elected. As was to have been expected, in the light of the platform, international concerns do not press upon him for discussion, seemingly they are not in his mind, and his whole attention is given to those questions of domestic policy which, to use his own words, make this plainly a new age. It was, as he saw it, a new age, an age with new thoughts, with men possessed of new beliefs and impatient of the old tricks and cunning which had so often cheated them. It was in that spirit he said: "We stand in the presence of an awakened Nation . . . a Nation that has awakened to a sense of neglected ideals and neglected duties; to the consciousness that the rank and file of her people find life very hard to sustain." What, he asked, did the platform mean? It meant "to show that we know what the Nation is thinking about, what it is most concerned about, what it wishes corrected, and what it desires to see attempted that is new and constructive and intended for its long future." He discussed at length the tasks ahead: the tariff and the trusts, laws to prevent financial confederacies, laws to improve labor conditions, the development of the American merchant mar ne; but of the relations that ought to mark the intercourse of America with her neighbors on this continent and the peoples of Europe or Asia

not one word, because the things of the moment were those interwoven into the social fabric of his own people.

A President no more than a Prime Minister or the President of the Council in France is given a free hand in the formation of his Cabinet. Political and geographical considerations — it was Lincoln who said that if the twelve Apostles had again to be chosen the principle of locality would determine their selection — motives of expediency or motives of policy, various reasons, sometimes important and sometimes trivial, bring one man into the Cabinet and cause the rejection of another, yet, in the main, the composition of the Cabinet, in America as in England and in France, is a fairly good index not only of the character of the President but also of the policy the Administration will follow. It is curious that long after the last sentence was written I should chance to run across Mr. Wilson's own language which I unconsciously paraphrased. In "Constitutional Government" he writes:

"Self-reliant men will regard their Cabinets as executive councils; men less self-reliant or more prudent will regard them as also political councils, and will wish to call into them men who have earned the confidence of their party. The character of the Cabinet may be made a nice index of the theory of the presidential office, as well as of the President's theory of party government."

When Mr. Wilson formed his Cabinet the public imagined that the same considerations that influenced his predecessors governed him; that the Cabinet rep-

resented political expediency, the payment of political debts and personal friendship, and it was difficult for the public to classify the members. Mr. Wilson, however, had confused the public not by following precedent but by liberally construing his own theories. Being a self-reliant man he regarded his Cabinet as primarily an executive council; he also saw the wisdom of calling to his Cabinet some men who had the confidence of the party and understood the peculiarities of the Congressional temperament; but there was not a single member who owed his appointment to friendship or was there because the President wanted to have at the board a companion to whom he could turn as an intimate apart from the official relation.

Taken as a whole the Cabinet was neither remarkable for its strength nor disgraceful for its weakness; it was fairly average, although it contained rather more than the usual number of unknown or little known men, but all of them were typical of what Mr. Wilson called the new age. That he should make Mr. Bryan Secretary of State, and thereby constitute him his chief official adviser and place him second in line to the succession, was to be expected, for Mr. Bryan had a great following and wielded an influence in the party, at that time, hardly less than that of the President himself. That he should appoint Mr. Garrison Secretary of War and Mr. Daniels Secretary of the Navy was to convince the country that he contemplated no policy of adventure and looked forward to four years of harmonious rela-

tions with all the world. For some reason not quite clear the Secretary of War has always been a lawyer. Mr. Garrison was an eminent lawyer, a man of high character and standing, but practically unknown outside of his State except to members of his profession, and without political reputation; but he was not associated in the public mind with militarism nor was he the advocate of a powerful military establishment; Mr. Daniels had served his political apprenticeship and had a wide political acquaintance, but he had held no important place of trust and had been given no opportunity to prove his capacity or to display his administrative ability, and his devotion to Mr. Bryan, whose political and social views he shared, created a prejudice against him. Mr. Bryan was a professed believer in and lover of peace; Mr. Daniels was known to be equally firm in his love of peace and detestation of war. In the first years of his administration, when the country was at peace, Mr. Daniels was the victim of his associations and a curious belief that the navy was a school for social experiment, which is the one thing the navy is not. With the outbreak of war his ability and energy in bringing the navy to a war footing made the country reverse its former unfavorable opinion and earned him its respect and admiration.

3

Just as the candidate's speech of acceptance is a pledge so the inaugural address of the new President

is a dedication. No President could deliver it unmoved, no man, no matter how base or unworthy, but must feel the solemnity of the simple but impressive ceremony that has centered about him, the responsibility that has become his, the destiny he holds, the faith that millions of his countrymen have in him, the hopes and ambitions he represents. He has sworn loyally and well to defend and serve, and then he speaks, and if ever a man should say what he believes and feels and under the inspiration of the moment open his heart he must. Some Presidents have been content to deal in platitudes, some Presidents have spoken what men long remembered, and one President spoke in deathless words, but no President but what has revealed his real character.

In his inaugural, the first of his great state papers, Mr. Wilson rose to lofty heights, set out the program it was his purpose Congress should follow, made articulate the things he believed, offered himself not as a partisan rejoicing in the victory of his party but as a leader to whom the cause of humanity was sacred. Recounting the abuses that had crept into the body politic and how "much fine gold has been corroded", telling of things that were to be accomplished, a comprehensive legislative program touching not only economic but also social conditions, he invited all men to see what was in his heart and mind. "The firm basis of government is justice, not pity," he said. "This is the high enterprise of the new day: to lift

everything that concerns our life as a Nation to the light that shines from the hearthfire of every man's conscience and vision of the right . . . And yet it will be no cool process of mere science. The Nation has been deeply stirred, stirred by a solemn passion, stirred by the knowledge of wrong, of ideals lost, of Government too often debauched and made an instrument of evil. The feelings with which we face this new age of right and opportunity sweep across our heart strings like some air out of God's own presence, where justice and mercy are reconciled and the judge and the brother are one. . . .

"This is not a day of triumph; it is a day of dedication. Here muster, not the forces of party, but the forces of humanity. Men's hearts wait upon us; men's lives hang in the balance; men's hopes call upon us to say what we will do. Who shall live up to the great trust? Who dares fail to try? I summon all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men, to my side. God helping me, I will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me."

In those places where it is the business of men to appraise and weigh and formulate a judgment of rulers and statesmen, in the chanceries of the world and in the embassies and legations of the nations great and small in Washington; in newspaper offices in London and Paris and Tokio, undoubtedly the assize had been held and the verdict recorded. The character of Mr. Wilson as the world then thought it knew it, a study

of his writings and speeches, his oft repeated declarations that of the possessions of mankind justice was the most precious, that wrongs which existed were to be righted, his seemingly utter indifference to and ignorance of foreign affairs, and the composition of his Cabinet — a Cabinet "which abounded in pacific discretion" — were the hostages he gave to the world that under his guidance America would give no thought to war or aggression, that no hope of conquest would allure her, that in his dealings with other nations he would be scrupulously governed by principles of justice and morality. The statesmen who were even then walking blindfold to the precipice of war must have felt certain America would not disturb their fatuous vision of peace.

CHAPTER VI

The First Year of Leadership

1

It is ironical that the fame of the man who loved peace rests on war. Mr. Wilson was no less a lover of peace than his Democratic predecessor Madison — and of him Mr. Wilson has written that he loved peace, "and was willing to secure it by any slow process of law or negotiation that promised to keep war at arm's length." Mr. Wilson contemned war and to him strife was abhorrent; his thoughts were engrossed with domestic problems and he had selected his Cabinet — "which was wanting in daemonic element" — as the instruments to deal with them; he attached so little importance to foreign affairs that he did not consider it necessary to appoint a competent foreign adviser, and yet with ironical perversity it was ordained that from the first day of his Presidency international relations should press heavily upon him. They run through his Administration like a scarlet thread in a monotonous web of dull gray. Had there been no war Mr. Wilson's Administration would have been memorable; in the first eighteen months of his "Premiership" he brought his party to the enactment

of legislation so extraordinary that had he done nothing else it would have made of his Presidency an epoch in American politics and foreshadowed what was to be accomplished in the two and a half years still remaining. But his fame would have been uncertain for many years, his legislation would have aroused bitter political controversy; and domestic policies are the monotonous pattern of dull gray as compared with the flaming thread of war.

From his Republican predecessor Mr. Wilson inherited Mexico. It is unnecessary to go into details, and even less necessary to discuss whether Mr. Taft, by the recognition of Huerta, should have cleared the way for Mr. Wilson. To Mr. Taft it seemed proper that a matter of high policy affecting the intimate relations of the United States and its most powerful southern neighbor ought to be determined by the Administration fresh with the mandate of the people rather than an Administration that had forfeited the confidence of the people. It was the question of recognition that confronted Mr. Wilson, and one week after he came to the White House, on March 11, 1913, he made his purpose known in a statement which, in view of its importance as not only defining his policy toward the republics of Latin America but also his general foreign policy, the first time he had made his foreign policy known, is given in full:

"In view of questions which are naturally upper-

most in the public mind just now, the President issues the following statement:

"One of the chief objects of my Administration will be to cultivate the friendship and deserve the confidence of our sister republics of Central and South America, and to promote in every proper and honorable way the interests which are common to the peoples of the two continents. I earnestly desire the most cordial understanding and coöperation between the peoples and leaders of America and, therefore, deem it my duty to make this brief statement.

"Coöperation is possible only when supported at every turn by the orderly processes of just government based upon law, not upon arbitrary or irregular force. We hold, as I am sure all thoughtful leaders of republican government everywhere hold, that just government rests always upon the consent of the governed, and that there can be no freedom without order based upon law and upon the public conscience and approval. We shall look to make these principles the basis of mutual intercourse, respect, and helpfulness between our sister republics and ourselves. We shall lend our influence of every kind to the realization of these principles in fact and practice, knowing that disorder, personal intrigue and defiance of constitutional rights weaken and discredit government and injure none so much as the people who are unfortunate enough to have their common life and their common affairs so tainted and disturbed. We can have no

sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition. We are the friends of peace, but we know that there can be no lasting or stable peace in such circumstances. As friends, therefore, we shall prefer those who act in the interests of peace and honor, who protect private rights and respect the restraints of constitutional provision. Mutual respect seems to us the indispensable foundation of friendship between States, as between individuals.

"The United States has nothing to seek in Central and South America, except the lasting interests of the peoples of the two continents, the security of governments intended for the people and for no special group or interest, and the development of personal and trade relationships between the two continents which shall redound to the profit and advantage of both and interfere with the rights and liberties of neither.

"From these principles may be read so much of the future policy of this government as it is necessary now to forecast; and in the spirit of these principles I may, I hope, be permitted with as much confidence as earnestness to extend to the governments of all the republics of America the hand of genuine disinterested friendship and to pledge my own honor and the honor of my colleagues to every enterprise of peace and amity that a fortunate future may disclose."

Until minor things were submerged by the universal chaos of the great war, Mexico was again and again

to threaten the peace of the United States and the President's political future. It subjected him to continued attack, he was accused of being cowardly and weak in not making war on Mexico, in having no policy, in vacillating when he ought to show firmness, in paltering when honor demanded a clear-cut decision. The Republicans eagerly seized upon his policy, or rather absence of all policy, as they termed it, to weaken his hold upon the country; it was an issue in the congressional elections of 1914 and again in the presidential election two years later. Many members of his own party were restive under this criticism and would gladly have welcomed war with Mexico because of the prestige an Administration gains from a short and successful war — and the outcome of the war would not have been in doubt from the first day — and because of the dislike the people of the border States have for the Mexicans.

Mr. Wilson knew of course this state of feeling. It required only such diplomacy as the State Department could easily furnish so to shape matters that Mexico would challenge the United States, which for its own dignity and in defense of the national honor must be met; and the country, irrespective of party, would support the President, unwillingly forced to chastise the insolent aggressor. Throughout, the attitude of Mexico was provocative, it afforded abundant justification for a President seeking war and ambitious for military glory; and although twice in three years

American troops entered Mexico and blood was shed, after brief occupations they were withdrawn, the President refusing to find a cause for war in the incidents that had made invasion necessary.

It does not have to be said that it was not cowardice or the fear of consequences that deterred Mr. Wilson, for he has given abundant evidence of his courage and his determination when he believes his course to be right, but it was in keeping with firmly founded principles and his code of morality to stand steadfast before the strong, but not to play the bully and take advantage of the weak. In "Division and Reunion", discussing the settlement of the Oregon boundary and the annexation of Texas, he had written: "With England, which was strong, we were ready to compound differences; from Mexico, which was weak, we were disposed to snatch everything, conceding nothing." He would not make it possible for the historian of the future to cast that reproach upon his Administration.

2

A week after the announcement of his Latin-American policy Mr. Wilson found it necessary, on March 18, to declare his position in regard to American cooperation in the financial affairs of China; the "dollar diplomacy" of the Taft Administration. American bankers had been invited by a syndicate of British, French, German, Russian and Japanese bankers to

participate in a loan to China, and the American bankers, two days earlier, had called upon Secretary Bryan to tell him they would not join the syndicate unless expressly requested to do so by the Washington Government. In this statement the President said the request desired would not be made because the Administration did not approve the conditions of the loan or the implication of responsibility. That responsibility "might conceivably go to the length in some unhappy contingency of forcible interference in the financial, and even the political, affairs" of China. That would be obnoxious to the principles upon which the American Government rests. Expressing the desire of the Government of the United States to aid the Chinese people in their development and to promote the most extended and intimate trade relationships with them, Mr. Wilson added: "This is the main material interest of its citizens in the development of China. Our interests are those of the open door — a door of friendship and mutual advantage. This is the only door we care to enter."

Thus twice in the first two weeks after his inauguration the man in whose thoughts domestic affairs occupied the chief place had been compelled by circumstances not of his seeking to turn from the consideration of matters of domestic policy to the field of foreign relations and had laid down the basic principles that would govern his conduct of external affairs.

3

Two weeks later the President was faced with a foreign question that had more threatening possibilities even than Mexico. The always smoldering antagonism between the people of the Pacific Coast and the Japanese had flamed anew by the introduction into the California legislature of a bill prohibiting the Japanese from owning or leasing lands. On April 4 the Japanese Ambassador brought to the attention of the Secretary of State the pending legislation, asserting that it was discriminatory and in violation of treaty rights. The President appealed to the Governor and legislature not to draw in question the treaty obligations of the United States, but the appeal failing Secretary Bryan went to California to use his personal influence to prevent the passage of the obnoxious legislation, in which he was unsuccessful. I shall not follow further in detail a controversy which dragged along into the following year and evoked several sharp protests from the Japanese Government. The President was placed in the awkward position of desiring scrupulously to observe treaty obligations and maintain international amity, but he was powerless to coerce California, the matter being strictly within the purview of the State and not subject to the interference or supervision of the Federal Government. This the State Department explained, asserting also that the legislation was not political, it was not to be assumed that it was part of a general policy or indicated

unfriendliness, but was wholly economic. The correspondence is lacking in that clearness of expression and directness of phrase that later were to distinguish important communications nominally emanating from the State Department but actually written in the White House, and it is quite evident Mr. Bryan, with the assistance of his subordinates, and not the President, was the author of this correspondence.

4

The issue raised by Japan had not diverted Mr. Bryan from vigorously pressing what was dearest to him and had the fullest support of the President. Mr. Bryan was a pacifist and so was Mr. Wilson when that was not a term of obloquy; Mr. Bryan had publicly announced shortly after his assumption of office that so long as he was Secretary of State the United States would not engage in war, and he was determined to remove all danger of war by the conclusion of a series of arbitration treaties which would substitute peaceful negotiation for the appeal to force. That was to be his policy as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he believed it would establish his lasting fame. It peculiarly appealed to a man living in the ultramontane kingdom of idealism seeking perfection, ignorant of international affairs, European politics and knowledge of the world; and he now espoused international arbitration with the same passionate ardor that had distinguished his championship of other issues largely

materialistic but which he was able to invest with his idealistic fancy.

On April 24 Mr. Bryan announced to the press that the diplomatic corps had been informed of the President's desire to conclude these treaties which were "intended to supplement the arbitration treaties now in existence and those that may be made hereafter." Believing that these treaties would make war impossible, Mr. Bryan concluded his statement by saying: "But whether or not the proposed agreement accomplishes as much as is hoped for it, it is at least a step in the direction of universal peace, and I am pleased to be the agent through whom the President presents this proposition to the Powers represented here."

5

With England there was a question pending, and while it was not settled until the following year it can be conveniently dealt with here. The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, by which Great Britain abrogated the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and relinquished to the United States the sole right to build and control a canal across the isthmus, provided that it should be open to the vessels of all nations on "terms of entire equality." The Act of Congress providing for the management and regulation of the canal exempted from the payment of tolls American vessels engaged in the coastwise trade, which Great Britain held was in violation

of the treaty and a discrimination in favor of American shipping; and a mild protest was lodged by the British Government. Mr. Taft and the Congress declined to accept this view, and contended that as only vessels under the American flag were permitted to engage in the coastwise trade the exemption was purely a matter of domestic regulation and could not in any way be injurious to British shipping, prohibited by law from the coastwise trade and therefore not brought in competition with American vessels. The question had to some extent been made political; the British claim was stoutly resisted by those members of Congress and others who had no liking for England, and the platforms of the Democratic and Progressive parties contained planks approving the canal being made toll free to American vessels.

Mr. Wilson ought to have regarded this as sufficient, and the party having spoken through its representatives he might very well have availed himself of the legal maxim of *stare decisis* and made no further effort to revitalize a contentious issue decently interred; but Mr. Wilson had read the treaty and the law, he had formed his own opinion of the morality involved, even if the letter of the law sustained his own government, and was indisposed to permit a lawyer's quibble to override a moral obligation.

Between his election in November and his inauguration in the following March, when he still exercised only the power of a private citizen but spoke

with the authority of the designated leader of his party and the President-elect, he made several attempts to induce Congress to repeal the discriminating section of the law, but without success. In a letter to Mr. William L. Marbury, of Baltimore, the President wrote that the exemption was a mistaken policy; that it was economically unjust and in clear violation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty. There is, of course, he added, "much honest difference of opinion as to the last point, as there is, no doubt, as to the others, but it is at least debatable and if the promises we make in such matters are debatable, I, for one, do not care to debate them. I think the country would prefer to let no question arise as to its whole-hearted purpose to redeem its promises in the light of any reasonable construction of them rather than debate a point of honor."

On March 5, 1914, Mr. Wilson went before Congress to urge the repeal of the exemption provision of the Panama Canal Act. He said in part:

"Whatever may be our own differences of opinion concerning this much debated measure, its meaning is not debated outside of the United States. Everywhere else the language of the treaty is given but one interpretation, and that interpretation precludes the exemption I am asking you to repeal. We consented to the treaty; its language we accepted, if we did not originate; and we are too big, too powerful, too self-respecting a nation to interpret with too strained or

refined a reading the words of our own promises just because we have power to give us leave to read them as we please. The large thing to do is the only thing that we can afford to do, a voluntary withdrawal from a position everywhere questioned and misunderstood. We ought to reverse our action without raising the question whether we were right or wrong, and so once more deserve our reputation for generosity and for the redemption of every obligation without quibble or hesitation.

"I ask this of you in support of the foreign policy of the Administration. I shall not know how to deal with other matters of even greater delicacy and nearer consequence if you do not grant it to me in ungrudging measure."

When Mr. Wilson was a candidate for the Presidency it was urged against his nomination that having almost no political experience he would in all probability be a failure as President. More than once in the first year of his Presidency he had confounded this prophecy, and in asking repeal he again displayed his political leadership. He might have pressed it on the merits of the case and argued in support of his contention, which would have given his opponents an opportunity to rebut his arguments. Mr. Wilson took broader ground. He put Congress in the position of sustaining an action impugning the national honor or reversing its action and protecting the honor of the nation; he appealed to morality; and to bring to his

support those men who might remain unmoved by moral considerations urged expediency and the public exigency. "Matters of even greater delicacy and nearer consequence" had an ominous meaning, but required no more precise definition. Japan was firmly insisting upon her rights, and Japan was the ally of England, as Congress knew. Mexico was flaunting the United States, and England had great commercial interests in Mexico. Not willingly would Congress "knuckle down" to England, but the friendship of England in a time of stress was lightly bought at the price of the canal tolls.

In securing repeal (Congress subsequently acted upon Mr. Wilson's recommendation) Mr. Wilson showed his power over Congress and his understanding of the temperament of his own people. Again and again he was to show this almost psychic comprehension, a comprehension that so frequently apparently was intuition rather than ratiocination that he was said to have an "uncanny" power of divination. Time after time he did or failed to do the one thing that at the moment seemed fatal, which subjected him to the most violent criticism, to which he remained indifferent, only later for these same critics grudgingly to admit that what he did for which they had criticized him, or failed to do which had provoked their denunciation, was correct. We need attribute to Mr. Wilson no supernormal powers, no quality not possessed by other men, except the rare quality of political leader-

ship developed to an extraordinary degree. He had the natural instinct of political leadership in the same way that other men have a peculiar sense of color or form. Mr. Wilson had said of himself that having grasped his facts he kept his imagination ahead of the facts. That is the master politician and is the secret of political leadership: the power to grasp facts and then to have the imagination to know when and how to present them so that they shall stir the imagination of the people. Abraham Lincoln had it, and it made him the leader in a great crisis. Pitt had it when the peril of the world was great. Woodrow Wilson has it at a time of even greater peril.

6

At the opening of Congress, on the second of December, 1913, Mr. Wilson delivered in person his annual address. With the exception of Mexico the pending controversies were not mentioned, but he showed what he conceived ought to be the relation of the United States to the rest of the world, which a few months later was to take form in his message urging the repeal of the Canal Act, by saying:

"There is only one possible standard by which to determine controversies between the United States and other nations, and that is compounded of these two elements: Our own honor and our obligations to the peace of the world. A test so compounded ought easily to be made to govern both the establishment of

new treaty obligations and the interpretation of those already assumed."

That baseless fabric of the dream of universal peace and good will and the brotherhood of nations was as real to Mr. Wilson as it was to European statesmen amusing themselves on the edge of the crater, and he invited all the world to share with him his phantasm.

"The country, I am thankful to say, is at peace with all the world," he told his audience, "and many happy manifestations multiply about us of a growing cordiality and sense of community of interest among nations, foreshadowing an age of settled peace and good will. More and more readily each decade do the nations manifest the willingness to bind themselves by solemn treaty to the processes of peace, the processes of frankness and fair concession." The United States had shown her sincere adherence to the cause of international friendship by gaining "the assent, in principle, of no less than thirty-one nations, representing four fifths of the population of the world, to the negotiation of treaties by which it shall be agreed that whenever differences of interest or policy arise which cannot be resolved by the ordinary processes of diplomacy they shall be publicly analyzed, discussed, and reported upon by a tribunal chosen by the parties before either nation determines its course of action."

Referring to Mexico as the "one cloud upon our horizon" and declaring that "there can be no certain

prospect of peace in America until General Huerta has surrendered his usurped authority in Mexico; until it is understood on all hands, indeed, that such pretended governments will not be countenanced or dealt with by the Government of the United States"; the President asserted that the United States was the friend of constitutional government in America; "more than that, America was its champion, because in no other way can neighbors, to whom America wishes in every way to make proof of friendship, work out their own development in peace and liberty." Yet the President contemplated no use of force against Mexico, nor did he purpose to change his policy, insistent as the public was on a more vigorous policy. Mr. Wilson saw the power and prestige of Huerta crumbling a little every day, and the collapse he believed not to be far away. "We shall not, I believe, be obliged to alter our policy of watchful waiting."

It will thus be seen how large a part foreign affairs played in the first year of his Administration and with what exactness Mr. Wilson charted his foreign policy. He had given assurances to the world and reassured his own people, to whom the thought of foreign adventure, aggression or military enterprise was abhorrent, even although there was a strong sentiment in favor of restoring order in Mexico and upholding the principle of republican government. In those twelve months Mr. Wilson made several speeches, from which only the briefest quotations can be made, whose

keynote was duty and unselfish service. He impressed upon the country and the world his desire for peace and that the duty imposed upon the United States, to use a phrase he coined later, was "to serve mankind", altruistically and without hope of reward.

At Gettysburg on July 4, 1913, to the veterans of the Grand Army and the Confederacy, he said: "Come, let us be comrades and soldiers yet to serve our fellow men in quiet counsel, where the blare of trumpets is neither heard nor heeded and where the things are done which make blessed the nations of the world in peace and righteousness and love." Addressing Congress on August 27, 1913, on relations with Mexico, he said: "We shall yet prove to the Mexican people that we know how to serve them without first thinking how we shall serve ourselves." In a speech in Philadelphia, October 25, 1913, he asked: "How are you going to assist in some small part to give the American people and, by example, the peoples of the world more liberty, more happiness, more substantial prosperity; and how are you going to make that prosperity a common heritage instead of a selfish possession?" At Mobile, Alabama, on October 27, 1913, Mr. Wilson, after affirming that it was impossible for any nation to be the friend of another except upon terms of equality and honor and that "it is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest", declared "that the United States will never again seek

one additional foot of territory by conquest. She will devote herself to showing that she knows how to make honorable and fruitful use of the territory she has, and she must regard it as one of the duties of friendship to see that from no quarter are material interests made superior to human liberty and national opportunity." On April 30, 1914, Mr. Wilson asked the permission of Congress to use the armed forces of the country against Huerta to obtain recognition of the rights and dignity of the United States, saying: "We seek to maintain the dignity and authority of the United States only because we wish always to keep our great influence unimpaired for the uses of liberty, both in the United States and wherever else it may be employed for the benefit of mankind."

7

The legislation of the first seventeen months of Mr. Wilson's Presidency, from the time of his inauguration until Germany steeped the world in its long night of misery and changed the whole relation of the life of individuals as also of nations, must be dismissed in a few sentences, important as it was to the social and commercial future of the American people.

The Democratic party was pledged to a revision of the tariff, and the policy of the party was in agreement with Mr. Wilson's views and principles. Following the custom of American legislation in giving to important measures the names of the chairmen of the committees

of the two houses having jurisdiction of the subject, the Tariff Act of 1913 is popularly known as the Simmons-Underwood Law, but for the truth of history it ought to be called the Wilson Law. It was the President who convened Congress without delay to enact the legislation, it was the President who determined the broad principles on which the bill should be framed, and who had to encounter the opposition of Mr. Underwood; for Mr. Wilson took more advanced ground than Mr. Underwood in reducing duties on raw materials. At every stage of the measure Mr. Wilson was consulted, whenever there was any difference of opinion between Mr. Wilson and his party in Congress Mr. Wilson prevailed. In similar circumstances a British Premier would have led his party in person in the House of Commons, and upon his skill, his adroitness, his power over men and the state of party discipline he either would have carried his bill through and strengthened his hold over his followers or been defeated and forced out of office.

Mr. Wilson led, but he was placed at the disadvantage of being denied the right to lead in person and having to exercise command at long range and through deputies. He could not face his party, quiet dissatisfaction in his own ranks or silence opposition, but in all that he did he showed the genius of leadership. When the bill was introduced it was predicted that it would have very evil effects on the party, that it would cause a breach that would destroy the Presi-

dent's authority; it was seriously questioned whether a majority could be found for the bill. Cassandra enjoyed her brief reign. Men with memories recalled the shipwreck of administrations on the tariff rock, and Cassandra gloomily prophesied that Mr. Wilson would be the victim of his own folly.

Prophecy is an inexact science. The bill passed, but it did not drive a wedge into the party ranks, and Mr. Wilson was made stronger by this first test of his power. It must be remembered that Mr. Wilson came into the White House an unknown man almost in the large field of national politics and with his reputation as the leader of his party still to be made. It is not improbable, one is inclined to think it is inherently probable, that Mr. Wilson deliberately sought the challenge and was willing to put to the test his leadership so that the country should without unnecessary delay be given proof of it. Other Presidents have considered it the part of prudence not to raise an issue at the very beginning of their term, to conciliate, leisurely to study the men whose opposition later they may have to meet, to strengthen themselves with the people, to intrench themselves behind a faction so as to be able to count on support when the attack must be made. Mr. Wilson adopted no circuitous methods. He went directly to his objective, and with the passage of the bill his party and the country at large recognized in him a leader of remarkable qualities and the master of his party.

In an even more remarkable degree Mr. Wilson displayed his political leadership when he compelled an unwilling Congress to reform the currency and banking laws. With the passage by the House of the tariff bill that body had nothing to occupy its attention until the Senate acted, and members of the House believed they were entitled to a well-earned holiday. Not so the President, who knew the advantage of position and how to use it. "I appeal to you with a deep conviction of duty," he said to Congress. "I believe that you share this conviction. I therefore appeal to you with confidence." He could focus the attention of the country upon the Senate, arguing the tariff, and the House, discussing banking reform, and this attention of the country has often proved a spur to lagging legislators. Mr. Wilson's plan worked admirably. Before the Senate passed the tariff bill the banking bill had gone through the House with a substantial majority, and the Senate, — it was now October, — tired out by its labors, appealed to the President for a brief respite by postponing the further consideration of the banking bill until the meeting of the regular session beginning the following December. Mr. Wilson refused, and again he exhibited his political skill. The bill, as he knew, would meet with bitter opposition in the Senate; the Republicans, for party reasons, were determined to defeat it if possible; there was division among the Democrats. To postpone consideration until December would be to play

into the hands of his opponents, who would find it comparatively easy to block progress by bringing forward appropriation and other bills having the right of way. A stern taskmaster, Mr. Wilson kept the Senate up to the collar, and it is fortunate he did so. Had the new fiscal system not been in operation at the beginning of the war it is doubtful whether the United States could have withstood the shock brought about by the derangement of the money markets of all the world, and it is certain that but for the new system the present Allies of the United States and the United States herself would have found the burdens imposed upon them in financing the war immeasurably increased.

8

For seventeen months with admirable fortitude, self-restraint, patience and the generosity of a strong man who has compassion for weakness and instability and scorns to take advantage of his strength, Mr. Wilson had resisted the temptation to make war on Mexico, to gain popularity by military glory, to break the peace of the world that he believed had lastingly come to the world, to permit the destruction of his great program of social reform by war and all its after consequences. He was now to be confronted with events that were to require even greater fortitude, even greater self-restraint; that would impose upon his patience a trial that at times was

crushing, that was to test to the limit not alone his generosity and his justice but also his statesmanship and his vision; that was to subject him to reproach and abuse, that disappointed his friends, perplexed the unprejudiced and aroused the passionate hatred of his opponents. No man was more maligned. Seldom has any man's motives been so little understood or so cruelly distorted. Silent in the face of criticism, uncomplaining and asking no vindication, admitting few persons to share his companionship, he worked and waited with a confidence born of conviction that the course he followed would not bankrupt his honor or that of the nation.

CHAPTER VII

America at the Outbreak of War

1

The war fell like a blow on Europe, although talk of war had been almost its daily diet for the last ten years, and since 1904 there had been no session of Parliament in which war with Germany had not been openly discussed and regarded as inevitable by some of the most influential English newspapers. British naval and military preparations were made always with the thought of Germany as the enemy. Across the Channel there was the same mental attitude. Both nations were firmly convinced there must come a day when they would have either to yield to Germany or fight for their existence; nevertheless in both countries the pacifist element was strong, Socialists, Internationalists, the men who love every other country except their own; the agents of Germany, who were to be found in every rank of society; Frenchmen and Englishmen, who loudly proclaimed their loyalty but were abetting Germany; Ministers of the Crown in England and members of the Government in France, — some of them in the highest places, — either allowed

themselves to be blinded or deliberately sought to betray their country for the advantage of Germany.

The same social forces that brought Mr. Wilson into power did a few years earlier bring Mr. Asquith into power. In England as in America there had been a revolt of the masses against the classes; just as in America the people were resentful of the privileges of plutocracy, of class legislation, of favors extended to a select few, so in England the laboring man, the artisan, the great lower middle class were demanding their "rights", and conscious of their power, determined to exert it. Mr. Asquith's supporters were not only "Liberals" in the party sense, but radicals, social reformers, advanced thinkers; and to them force or restraint was intolerable. In economics they were free traders, because, as they believed in their delusion, free trade broke down the barriers between nations, and internationalism was one of the cardinal articles of their faith. They passionately advocated disarmament, because great navies and huge standing armies were a menace and a sure invitation to war, and to them war was anathema. There was more than a little leaven of idealism in all this; they were as selfish and grasping as the professional philanthropist. If instead of the people being taxed to build battleships and maintain armies their millions were used for the benefit of the people, for old-age pensions, workingman's insurance and other social reforms that were praiseworthy, and some of the fantastic schemes that

Utopia delights in, the people would be the gainers; especially if the rich were to be made to bear more than their equitable burden of taxation.

Holding his commission under these terms, Mr. Asquith was justified in enacting his program of social legislation. He represented for the time being the majority; that majority had demanded certain changes in the social fabric, and the reforms that enticed them he believed in. It was therefore not only his duty but his desire so to shape the foreign policy of his Administration as to remove the danger of war with Germany, and as an earnest of good faith to reduce to the lowest limits consistent with the national safety military expenditures. The foreign policy of his Administration, for which he was responsible but which was carried out through his Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, is a sorry story of that curse of European diplomacy, treaty making in the dark. There were the usual secret agreements, the exchange of "confidential" letters, "private" conversations, the customary network of intrigue and deceit binding nations whose people were kept in ignorance and who, when they asked inconvenient questions, were told it would be unpatriotic to embarrass the government merely to have their idle curiosity satisfied. The whole story has since been told; it is now history and the world knows it, but it reflects little credit upon the men on whom responsibility rests.

Almost to the very day of war this policy of beguil-

ing the people was followed, and scarcely a week passed but what members of the Cabinet told English audiences they had nothing to fear. A few months before the war, Mr. Lloyd George, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said: "This is the most favorable moment in twenty years to overhaul our expenditures on armaments." About the same time Lord Haldane, the Lord Chancellor, the great authority in the Cabinet on Germany, who had been sent by the Prime Minister to Germany to see if an understanding could not be reached so as to remove the danger of war which every one feared, said: "Europe was an armed camp, but an armed camp in which the indications were that there was a far greater prospect of peace than ever there was before."

That was the picture within a few months of the declaration of war, but after the war had been in progress two months, for the first time the truth was told. Speaking at Cardiff, on October 2, 1914, Mr. Asquith admitted that for two years at least he had known that Germany was preparing to make her war of conquest. The German Government, in 1912, he said, "asked us — to put it quite plainly — they asked us for a free hand so far as we were concerned if, and when, they selected their opportunity, to overbear and dominate the European world."

2

Thus if the war came as a staggering and unexpected blow to the English people daily fed on the thought of war, discussed by their politicians and made an issue in party politics, Americans, to whom the thought of war was very remote, who knew of the politics of Europe only as they gleaned them from their newspapers, were amazed at the outbreak of the war. It was incredible. Nowhere was war so detested as in the United States; no people so profoundly believed that peace ruled the world as did Americans. A few men there were, it is true, wiser, a few students of European politics who saw as clearly as the elect in England or France and who were not deceived by the sophisms of Ministers or the fable of the lion and the lamb; but to the great majority of Americans the war that had so often been talked about and now had come was unbelievable.

One of Mr. Wilson's biographers, a friend and admirer, writing in 1916, when the United States was neutral and the policy of the President was misunderstood and it seemed necessary that his adherents should interpret and defend it, offers this inadequate explanation:

"The outbreak of the European war was a most untoward event for President Wilson. His thoughts and his plans had been concerned with the domestic problems of our politics and his Cabinet had been chosen with a view to such occupations. The country was

deeply in arrears as regards measures for adjusting law and administration to existing business and social needs, and he was in the first stages of a program of reform quite enough to consume a presidential term, when the explosion took place that shook the world. Apparently nothing could have been more inopportune."

"Inopportune!" What a perfect sense of proportion. Had Mr. Wilson's biographer been living at the time of the Flood he would probably have described it as "annoying" and interfering with Mrs. Noah's spring cleaning.

The truth is no head of a State was ever placed in a more delicate position or one requiring greater tact, skill and statesmanship than was Mr. Wilson at the outbreak of the war. That his program of domestic reform was in all probability wrecked (subsequent legislation showed that he was able to salvage at least a portion) was a consequence less serious than the danger of division and disunion among his own people, which was of all dangers the greatest, and immediately forced itself upon Mr. Wilson. In all other countries the cleavage was distinct; the people were either pro-Ally or pro-German; they hoped either for the supremacy of Allied arms or the victory of Germany; they either sympathized with democracy and constitutional liberty, as typified by Great Britain and France, or they believed in autocracy and the rule of force represented by Germany; but in America, in

August, 1914, this solidarity of two opposing camps did not exist.

Speaking broadly America was divided not into two but four camps: One, Americans who because of descent, affiliations, admiration for English institutions and her political system, her literature and her contribution to the science of jurisprudence, on which American law is founded, were the friends of England, her champions loyal and steadfast from the first day of the war; to them the war was a conflict between two opposing schools of civilization, and they hoped for the triumph of the men of their own blood and thought.

Two, Americans who because of the false teachings of history, who from their childhood had been brought up to believe that England was the bully among nations, in whom old grudges still rankled or who had personal scores to pay off against individual Englishmen, were anti-English and the supporters of Germany.

Three, Americans who were indifferent, whose attitude can be summed up in the pithy sentence, "the war is none of our business", and to whom the war offered great business opportunities. To these Americans most distinctly the war was none of their business. The political principle that had been the strength of America was now to be its weakness. What had enabled America to develop as no other nation and had created an intense spirit of confidence and strength in Americans was their detachment

from European politics. The Seven Years' War, one of the most momentous periods in history, which was fought not only in Europe but in Asia and Africa, which was to gain for England at the cost of France, America as well as India, was to the English colonists in America, President Wilson tells us, "only the French and Indian War. Their own continent was the seat of their thought." This extreme self-concentration, this centering of their thoughts on their own continent, has always distinguished Americans; it is as marked in the American temperament to-day as it was one hundred and fifty years ago, and while it has given the American the pride he has in country, it has produced localism and a certain inability to appraise values. To those Americans unashamed because they were indifferent Europe was at war, since, as their histories taught them, war was the natural condition of European nations, this war was no different from any other; the great moral principle escaped them, nor did they understand that it was a war not to save dynasties or to gratify ambition but to save democracy from perishing off the face of the earth. It therefore accorded with their traditions and political teachings to remain unmoved spectators of the "quarrel" and continue to go about their own affairs. We shall see later why they were blind and that in part, at least, they are not to be held to blame.

Four, Germans, the so-called German-Americans, the great majority of whom while pretending to be

loyal Americans and owing no allegiance to Germany were at heart German and devoted to her interests; the Irish, Austrians, Turks and other subjects of the Central Powers. These elements constituted a group bitterly and openly hostile to England.

It is impossible of course to give exact figures when no precise data are available and estimates must be guesswork, but with such information as we have, based on census statistics of nativity and immigration, the speeches and votes of members of Congress, newspaper utterances, known political and social conditions in various parts of the country, and other tests, crude but fairly accurate, it is approximately correct that the Americans in group one outnumbered those in group two; if to group two is added the third group, the total would be heavily in excess of the first group; and the combined second, third and fourth groups give a preponderant majority over group one. In other words, at the outbreak of the war the friends of England in America were submerged by lukewarm opponents, the indifferent and the bitterly hostile. There were in addition certain cross currents which must enter into the calculation. The line of division, curiously enough, was geographical as well as social and intellectual, modified again by other currents. In the large cities, notably in the East, due to intermarriage and social intercourse, the leisure class and the wealthy supported England, and joined with them were the great bankers and important business men having

intimate relations with English banks and firms; but this influence was offset to a certain extent by German bankers and merchants, to whom Berlin and not London was the center of their thoughts. Lawyers, doctors, clergymen, college professors, the "intellectuals", in short, were, in the mass, pro-English, because they did their own thinking and had quickly decided that Germany was the aggressor; moreover, the spiritual and intellectual bond linked them to England, while Germany to them was alien. In this class, however, the ranks were thinned by those scientists, scholars, chemists and doctors who had studied in Germany and had brought back with them an exaggerated idea of German learning and efficiency, who had been in the habit of looking to Germany rather than to England or France for discovery and pure knowledge, and to whom the German was still the good-natured, moral and honest companion of his youth. American colleges had many German professors, who invited their students to share with them their admiration for German *Kultur* and created a German atmosphere; English members of the faculty were rare, and such as there were taught their subject but made no attempt to turn their lecture halls into centers of propaganda.

Thousands of Jews every year were driven forth from Russia to find a haven with their coreligionists in the congested districts of the large cities, there to become naturalized and often to be a determining

factor in an election. With the memory of their wrongs the American Jew, from the peddler who slowly spelled his way through his Yiddish newspaper, to the great banker, forgot what England had done for his race and remembered only the indignities that Russia had put upon him, the massacres her officials had instigated, the misery and degradation that had been his, and he prayed that Russia might be defeated and the faces of her rulers ground in the dust; the influence of American Jewry, social, political and financial, while not pro-German was, because of Russia, indirectly anti-English. In the West, on the Pacific Coast especially, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had always been unpopular and was regarded as a menace to America, and that Alliance was to be one of the reasons why the people of the Far West were indifferent to a war that would still further increase the prestige of Japan and make her more than ever to be feared; and they were able easily to persuade themselves Allied success threatened their own security and self-interest would be served by a German victory.

These were the passions war brought to America. As she fought the battle of the spirit and watched men dying for their salvation America was to find her soul, and Mr. Wilson was to lead his people to righteousness.

3

And what of Mr. Wilson?

Had the war taken place a few years earlier, when

Mr. Wilson was holding a chair at one of the universities, no one can doubt that the day Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium he would have taken his place with the men of his own class and, similar to the great majority of the "intellectuals", his voice and his pen would have been one of the powerful influences for right. His descent, his training, his sympathies, his sense of morality and justice make this certain. Mr. Wilson was not the political historian of Europe, nor had he more than the average well-educated man's knowledge of the great political movements of Europe in the past or that close familiarity with contemporary diplomacy and the hidden forces of international politics that is part of the training of every European statesman who aspires to high office — his work had been in other directions — but as the student of the social and governmental systems of Europe, and of England especially, his sympathies must naturally align him with men of his own race who had been the champions of liberty and political freedom. His admiration for the political genius of England had been frequently expressed; it was the English rather than the German system of education that he believed was best suited for America. He had spent numerous holidays in England, enjoying the peaceful countryside on bicycle or on foot; Englishmen were his friends and he understood them; he not only spoke their language but he thought as they did; but of Germans he had only the superficial

knowledge that is the common property of all men of the world.

In 1914 Mr. Wilson was not a private person to give free rein to his sympathies, to be swayed by his emotions or to yield to the impulse of championing a cause that did not touch the interests of his own country. Mr. Wilson was the President of the United States, and as such he was charged with a solemn duty.

In his short life of the President published in 1916, Professor Henry Jones Ford of Princeton University, an old friend and associate, compares Mr. Wilson's course with that of Washington in 1793, who was termed perfidious, cowardly and ungrateful because he remained neutral instead of going to the assistance of France. Hamilton defended Washington's policy, and Ford quotes Hamilton: "Rulers are only trustees for the happiness and interest of their nation, and cannot, consistently with their trust, follow the suggestions of kindness and humanity towards others, to the prejudice of their constituents." A selfish doctrine, it may be said, but it is the doctrine that all nations have learned. Half a century later an English statesman, in less stilted language, subscribed to the Hamiltonian doctrine. "The Foreign Secretary of this country", Lord John Russell said in the course of the "Don Pacifico" debate of 1850, "is the Minister not of France, nor of Russia, nor of any other foreign country, but of Great Britain alone, and he has to think first and foremost of her interests."

"If President Wilson had acted in a spirit of knight errantry," Professor Ford writes, "he might have avoided the reproaches now heaped upon him by those who view the case through the medium of their sympathies. What he did do was to make the welfare of his own country the guide of his actions. . . . The duties of trusteeship, whether public or private, are confined to actual and definite obligations. All the objections raised against Wilson's course apply quite as fully to Washington's course, and the principle involved in both cases is the same — the principle of trusteeship. . . . That a larger, more generous view of duty might have been taken is a position that is logically tenable. But if the principle of trusteeship, as adopted by Washington and formulated by Hamilton, is accepted as sound, then the course pursued by Wilson must be approved, since its particulars, when examined from this point of view, show conformity to that principle."

This is a somewhat labored defense, frankly offered as a defense at a time when it seemed imperative to the friends of Mr. Wilson, for his own fame and to justify their loyalty and trust, to defend him and explain his policy; and of this defense and explanation there was necessity, for Mr. Wilson was understood neither at home nor abroad. His friends, with the best intentions, did not help him, and he, too little caring for fleeting judgment, was content to wait for the matured and reasoned verdict of history. It is

unfortunate that Doctor Ford while stressing as the animating motive of Mr. Wilson's policy the obligations of a trustee, entirely neglects the higher motives that influenced him.

It is true that his duty as revealed to him was clear and that his first and chief obligation was to his own country: to keep America at peace both at home and abroad. The interests of America had been confided to his keeping; he could best serve those interests by peace. It was the same principle that had governed him in his relations with Mexico, that had brought him bitter censure, that had made his opponents accuse him of being such a coward lover of peace that he would willingly barter the honor of the nation and remain unmoved by the contempt of the world. To some men there are things more terrible than war, and to them war is so foul a thing they will do everything in honor to avoid it. Mr. Wilson would go to war, but not until there was no alternative.

His position was that of a trustee who must guard the interests of his ward, but who must not, either in law or ethics, do any action that, morally right, may be attended by disastrous consequences. It was the policy of caution, it was the policy of a statesman who was not timid but was carefully feeling his ground, who knew the difficulties he had to contend with and the danger from any incautious step; but what one likes to know is that while his countrymen were swayed by sympathy, prejudice or material consideration,

from the very first day of the war Mr. Wilson saw the moral issues involved, saw that the United States was placed in a position of exceptional moral responsibility, and that to the United States had been given an opportunity such as had rarely been afforded to a nation to serve morality and mankind.

Mr. Wilson's belief was that even if his people were united — which they were not — and sanctioned war against Germany — which they did not; and to have made war on England was unthinkable — whatever temporary advantage it might have been to England and her Allies, ultimately they, and not they alone but all civilization, would gain by the United States maintaining her neutrality. In August, 1914, the world was to learn the meaning of modern war, of which it then was in complete ignorance; to see the complex structure of society disorganized and the complicated industrial machinery of peace transformed into the mechanism of war; to see the whole man power of nations mobilized to fight in the field or to make it possible for armies to fight. No nation then appreciated its strength; of what it was capable; how much it could endure; its capacity to meet the demands suddenly laid upon it. The potential power of the United States the world knew as well as Americans, but at that moment the thing that counted was armies whose men were counted by the million; not raw recruits hastily whipped together, but trained soldiers with experienced officers, equipped with guns

and all the other inventions of science for slaughter, all those things that Germany had piled up for forty years and of which England and France had such a beggarly store and the United States was poverty-stricken. Without an army and with no means of creating one until the emergency was over — for the very magnitude of the conflict encouraged the general belief that the war must be of short duration because no nation could stand for more than a few months the physical or financial strain — of what use could be the United States?

The material power of the United States could not be exerted, but its moral influence could be made a force incapable of resistance. The time must come, Mr. Wilson thought, by persuasive counsel it might even be accelerated, when neither side would dare to make the first overture for peace, but both sides would gladly welcome the good offices of a disinterested friend; and what nation was better fitted for that rôle than the United States? In Europe there was no nation, because they were all linked to the belligerents by dynastic or political ties, but the United States, aloof from the politics of Europe, allied with no nation but the friend of all, seeking neither territorial gains nor political prestige, could, without risking suspicion or exciting jealousy, at the opportune moment, play the part of the mediator, and by appeal and moderation be the means of restoring peace.

Still another consideration had great weight with

Mr. Wilson. Germany began the war by violating a treaty and with shameless cynicism publicly announced that when the law of nations came into conflict with the law of necessity international law no longer existed; and this was quickly followed by other infractions of public law. The irresolution and hesitating policy of the British Government in blockading Germany without formally declaring a blockade, its almost apologetic attitude for exercising the indubitable legal right of visit and search, the extension of the list of absolute contraband to meet modern conditions timidly done instead of being boldly proclaimed, the weakness and vacillation of the Foreign Office produced in the public mind the impression that the rights of small nations were being ruthlessly trampled upon, that the paper blockades and the Milan decrees and the Orders in Council of the Napoleonic wars, which so bitterly aroused American animosity, were being revived, that the sanctions of public law and public morality were cast aside, that England no less than Germany was determined to substitute might for right, and the world was in danger of reverting to barbarism.

It was not easy for the public to understand the merits of the issues raised or to pronounce judgment on the legality of questions that divided bench and bar. The partisans of both nations filled the newspapers with their arguments, and Germany, with more adroitness than her opponent, muddied the waters by

academic discussion of international law that enlightened no one but only brought further confusion to a public already puzzled and uncertain whether, in the convenient formula, there was not "right on both sides." Disputable points of international law the common man did not attempt to pass upon, but he believed he was competent to decide the broad principle of justice, and to him it seemed neither just nor in keeping with strict neutrality that England could buy whatever she wanted in the United States while to Germany that privilege — to many persons it was a right rather than a privilege — was denied. Strange as it may seem now, yet it is nevertheless true that at that time this advantage held by England produced a certain reaction in favor of Germany and caused it to be believed — especially among the unthinking, the opponents of England and the partisans of Germany — that the Administration was unduly well disposed toward England, that it was showing favoritism instead of being impartial, and the law was construed to the detriment of Germany. England's command of the sea made it appear as if Germany, and not England and France and poor tortured Belgium, was the under dog, and the American love of fair play and sympathy for the under dog fighting against terrific odds and handicapped by the sham neutrality of America created for Germany a sympathy which Americans now recognize was misplaced and which they regret. Germany with some shrewd-

ness played on cupidity by insidiously accusing England of preventing Americans from making the profits that were always legitimate in war. Germany, her agents let it be known, was anxious to buy at extravagant prices cotton, wheat, copper, practically everything that America had to sell, but England selfishly stood in the way, in her hatred of Germany caring nothing for the loss she brought to America or the wealth of which she deprived her.

To Mr. Wilson, therefore, it seemed that circumstances imposed upon him the duty of being the champion and guardian of neutrality, and by defending public law and protecting public morality he would render to all the world, to belligerents no less than neutrals, an inestimable service, that would be as valuable in a time of stress as it would be in the future when peace again reigned. The United States was the most powerful of all the neutrals; the one nation whose friendship, even at that time, all the belligerents were anxious to retain; whose material resources, if thrown into the struggle, might prove the decisive factor; whose influence no nation could affect to treat with contempt; whose voice must be listened to when smaller nations could with safety be ignored.

It was an error of judgment; frankly to be so recorded, perhaps the sole instance when Mr. Wilson's judgment was in error. Looking back now it is easy enough to see, and still easier for the critic who plays

with his facts to say, that Mr. Wilson could have been of greater service to mankind had he turned the thought of his countrymen toward war instead of trying to keep before them the thought of peace; had he at the first opportunity yielded to the pressure put upon him, and had he done in 1915, when Germany gave abundant cause for war, what he was to do two years later; had he, in short, begun to arm with the first day of conflict. It is the easy thing to say, and also the unworthy thing. There is no doubt Mr. Wilson could have carried the country into war, for the power of the President in foreign affairs is too great to be withstood, and the traditions of the Presidency make him the arbiter of war or peace, but he would have driven an unwilling country into war instead of leading a country resolved on war as the only escape from the surrender of honor and the confession of cowardice; he would have made war with an army and not a nation; and war is no longer a combat of armies but a conflict of nations and the massing of the spiritual strength of peoples. It would have been a war against Germany and a battle at home, not the actual clash of arms, for revolt was not to be feared, but a long, drawn-out struggle with those who did not believe America was justified in going to war and who would have hampered and obstructed the prosecution of the war. Actually guilty of treason they might not have been, but Mr. Wilson would have been embarrassed as Lincoln was, whose task was made more difficult by

the friends of the South in the North; by political opponents secretly in sympathy with the enemy who would gladly have seen the North accept an inconclusive peace and agree to a compromise so that the Confederacy might be spared the humiliation of unconditional surrender and save some vestige at least of the institution to which she was wedded.

It is easy now to say that Mr. Wilson, no matter how splendid his motives, was deficient in that one quality without which no man can be a great statesman. A statesman must have imagination; it is vision that raises him above the common level; and Mr. Wilson, incapable of foretelling the future, was no greater than the ordinary man. But had he done so, had he been able in 1915 to see what 1917 was to bring, he would have been the towering genius of his time, a superman. To no European ruler or statesman or general, not even to the criminal who provoked the war or those about him, was knowledge vouchsafed of the future. If Mr. Wilson was ignorant, so were they, and their means of knowing was far greater than his. It was the same reproach that Lincoln had to bear, whose vision was so limited that he was content to call for seventy-five thousand volunteers to serve three months to subdue a rebellion that was crushed only at the end of four years and taxed the full resources of the North. To-day no one accuses Lincoln of being a pacifist or not being a seer. He has passed into immortality; his error of judgment

has long been forgotten. What the historian of the future will see is that Mr. Wilson knew the temper of his people, knew that they were not ready to be led to war, knew that the time to make them sanction war had not yet come.

4

It was in these circumstances that Mr. Wilson on August 18, 1914, issued his much criticized exhortation to his fellow countrymen to be neutral in thought as well as in name, and in his address put in form the motives which have been analyzed. Americans, the President wrote, were bound in honor and affection to think first of America and her interests, as any diversions among them "would be fatal to our peace of mind, and might seriously stand in the way of the proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation, and speak the counsels of peace and accommodation, not as a partisan, but as a friend.

"The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought as well as in action; must put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.

"My thought is of America. I am speaking, I feel sure, the earnest wish and purpose of every

thoughtful American, that this great country of ours, which is, of course, the first in our thoughts and in our hearts, should show herself in this time of peculiar trial a nation fit beyond others to exhibit the fine poise of undisturbed judgment, the dignity of self-control, the efficiency of dispassionate action; a nation that neither sits in judgment upon others nor is disturbed in her own counsels, and which keeps herself fit and free to do what is honest and disinterested and truly serviceable for the peace of the world.

"Shall we not resolve to put upon ourselves the restraint which will bring to our people the happiness and the great and lasting influence for peace we covet for them?"

Few things Mr. Wilson had done unloosed such a furious storm. To those persons who were the passionate champions of the Allied cause, to whom in the first two weeks of the war the German had revealed himself the beast he is, to whom the meaning of the war had never been obscured, who knew that this was a death struggle of civilization against savagery, Mr. Wilson's words of quiet counsel and his appeal to selfish interest was a bribe to sell their honor for a mess of rotten pottage. Bitterly they resented it and deeply they felt their humiliation. America, too intent upon her own ungenerous comfort, thinking only of her own sordid gain, was eternally disgraced.

Indignation still seething was increased when Mr. Wilson sent to the German Emperor a benevolent

expression of neutrality, and to an official Belgian delegation expressed the pious hope that the war would soon be over, but sedulously refrained from any expression that would reveal his sympathies. The German Emperor early began his monstrous campaign of lies when he cabled to the President that the British and French armies were using dum-dum bullets in violation of the Hague Convention. On September 16 Mr. Wilson's reply was made public. "I am honored," he wrote, "that you should have turned to me for an impartial judgment as the representative of a people truly disinterested as respects the present war and truly desirous of knowing and accepting the truth. . . . Presently, I pray God very soon, this war will be over. The day of accounting will then come when, I take it for granted, the nations of Europe will assemble to determine a settlement." The President felt sure that "where wrongs have been committed their consequences and the relative responsibility involved will be assessed," and he held it would be unwise and inconsistent with neutrality for a single Government to express a final judgment. "I feel sure that such a reservation of judgment until the end of the war, when all its events and circumstances can be seen in their entirety and in their true relation, will commend itself to you as a true expression of sincere neutrality."

On the same day, to a Belgian Commission, sent by their Government to bring to the notice of the

American Government the atrocities and the violations of the laws of war of which Germany had been guilty, Mr. Wilson used practically the same language. Expressing his pleasure at receiving the representatives of a people for whom the people of the United States had strong friendship and admiration, declaring that the American people "love justice, seek the true paths of progress, and have a passionate regard for the rights of humanity", Mr. Wilson gave to the men pleading the cause of a martyred country, who had put into his hands the report of a judicial committee telling of women ravished and men mutilated and cities burned to the ground, only the cold comfort of patience; he could offer them nothing warmer than the same pious hope expressed to the German Emperor that the war would soon be over and bring its day of reckoning. He said:

"Presently, I pray God very soon, this war will be over. The day of accounting will then come, when, I take it for granted, the nations of Europe will assemble to determine a settlement. Where wrongs have been committed their consequences and the relative responsibility involved will be assessed. . . .

"It would be unwise, it would be premature for a single Government, however fortunately separated from the present struggle, it would be inconsistent with the neutral position of any nation, which like this has no part in the contest, to form or express a final judgment."

While the attack was still being furiously delivered Mr. Wilson was to receive support from an unexpected quarter. Second only to Mr. Wilson in the strength of his following, Mr. Roosevelt, despite his defeat, still remained the idol of his adherents, who looked to him not only for political guidance but moral inspiration. No two men were more unlike; it would be impossible, one would say, for them ever to think alike or to see eye to eye, yet perhaps for the first and last time in their lives they were in harmony; and Mr. Roosevelt's approval of the President's course was undoubtedly a potent influence in quieting the demand for war and convincing the country of the wisdom of Mr. Wilson's policy in maintaining neutrality. It was the more surprising because the public associated Mr. Roosevelt with prompt and vigorous action, to whom temporizing was hateful; who was not afraid to use force when weakness was folly; whose love of justice was so compelling that he dare not compromise with wrong; whose instinctive sense of morality made him always do what was right. Thousands of Americans, hundreds of thousands in the aggregate, were with open minds waiting for a sign, waiting to have some one with sufficient authority and in whom they had confidence show them their duty; whether a duty higher than personal sympathy demanded that the American people should hold the scales of judgment level between the wrongdoer and his victim, or the Germans were to be encouraged to believe

that "Americans were as neutral between right and wrong as Pontius." Mr. Roosevelt was to lead them.

Mr. Wilson had received the Belgian Commission on September 16, 1914, and dispassionately dismissed them. One week later, while the press of the country was bitterly denouncing or vehemently defending Mr. Wilson, an article by Mr. Roosevelt entitled "The World War; Its Tragedies and Its Lessons" was published in the New York *Outlook*. Mr. Wilson had carefully abstained from showing any partiality and had steered the safe course of judicial impassivity; Mr. Roosevelt championed Germany, he defended the supreme law of necessity, flatly declared that it was not the business of the United States to interfere in the affairs of Belgium, and that the highest interests of the United States required the maintenance of neutrality; in that respect fully sustaining the position of the President, and like him justifying neutrality because of the opportunity it would afford the United States to be the peacemaker.

"Our country," Mr. Roosevelt wrote, "stands well-nigh alone among the great civilized Powers in being unshaken by the present world-wide war. All of us on this continent ought to appreciate how fortunate we are that we of the Western World have been free from the working of the causes which have produced the bitter and vindictive hatred among the great military Powers of the Old World. We owe this immunity primarily to the policies grouped together under

the title of the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine is as vital to the interests of this hemisphere as it has ever been. . . . We must . . . stand ready to act as an instrument for the achievement of a just peace if or when the opportunity arises."

Mr. Roosevelt was greatly impressed with Germany's military efficiency and gave his approval to the very thing all the world is now pledged to destroy, German militarism. "As for her wonderful efficiency," he wrote, — "her equipment, the foresight and decision of her General Staff, her instantaneous action, her indomitable persistence — there can be nothing but the praise and admiration due to a stern, virile, and masterful people, a people entitled to hearty respect for their patriotism and farseeing self-devotion."

Germany's justification for the violation of Belgian neutrality Mr. Roosevelt condoned: "Of course, if there is any meaning to the words 'right' and 'wrong' in international matters, the act was wrong. The men who shape German policy take the ground that in matters of vital national moment there are no such things as abstract right and wrong, and that when a great nation is struggling for its existence it can no more consider the rights of neutral powers than it can consider the rights of its own citizens as these rights are construed in times of peace, and that everything must bend before the supreme law of national preservation. Whatever we may think of the moral-

ity of this plea, it is certain that almost all great nations have in times past again and again acted in accordance with it. England's conduct toward Denmark in the Napoleonic wars, and the conduct of both England and France toward us during the same wars, admit only of this species of justification; and with less excuse the same is true of our conduct toward Spain and Florida nearly a century ago. I wish it explicitly understood that I am not at this time passing judgment one way or the other upon Germany for what she did to Belgium. . . . I am merely calling attention to what has actually been done in Belgium, in accordance with what the Germans unquestionably sincerely believe to be the course of conduct necessitated by Germany's struggle for life."

It was not the first time in history innocent people had been made to suffer, and the descendants of Germans and Irish in the United States could salve their consciences by the recollection that whatever Belgium was enduring, even greater had been the misery of their forefathers, Mr. Roosevelt told them. "They [the Belgians] are suffering somewhat as my own German ancestors suffered when Turenne ravaged the Palatinate, somewhat as my Irish ancestors suffered in the struggles that attended the conquests and reconquests of Ireland in the days of Cromwell and William. The suffering is by no means as great, but it is very great. . . . It is neither necessary nor at the present time possible to sift from the charges,

countercharges, and denials the exact facts as to the acts alleged to have been committed in various places. . . .

"I think, at any rate I hope, I have rendered it plain that I am not now criticizing, that I am not passing judgment one way or the other, upon Germany's action. I admire and respect the German people. I am proud of the German blood in my veins. When a nation feels that the issue of a contest in which, from whatever reason, it finds itself engaged will be national life or death, it is inevitable that it should act so as to save itself from death and to perpetuate its life. . . . The rights and wrongs of these cases where nations violate the rules of abstract morality in order to meet their own vital needs can be precisely determined only when all the facts are known and when men's blood is cool."

Belgium, Mr. Roosevelt bluntly said, was no concern of the United States and it would be the height of folly were the United States to make the wrongs of Belgium her own. "A deputation of Belgians," he wrote, "has arrived in this country to invoke our assistance in the time of their dreadful need. What action our Government can or will take I know not. It has been announced that no action can be taken that will interfere with our entire neutrality. It is certainly eminently desirable that we should remain entirely neutral, and nothing but urgent need would warrant breaking our neutrality and taking sides one

way or the other. Our first duty is to hold ourselves ready to do whatever the changing circumstances demand in order to protect our own interests in the present and in the future. . . . Neutrality may be of prime necessity in order to preserve our own interests, to maintain peace in so much of the world as is not affected by the war, and to conserve our influence for helping toward the reëstablishment of general peace when the time comes; for if any outside Power is able at such time to be the medium for bringing peace, it is more likely to be the United States than any other. . . .

"Of course it would be folly to jump into the gulf ourselves to no good purpose; and very probably nothing that we could have done would have helped Belgium. We have not the smallest responsibility for what has befallen her, and I am sure the sympathy of this country for the suffering of the men, women and children of Belgium is very real. Nevertheless, the sympathy is compatible with full acknowledgment of the unwisdom of our uttering a single word of official protest unless we are prepared to make that protest effective; and only the clearest and most urgent national duty would ever justify us in deviating from our rule of neutrality and non-interference."

Mr. Wilson's refusal to utter "a single word of official protest" was deeply resented in England and France, and in those neutral countries then not even remotely affected by the war the almost callous in-

difference of America to German infamies created a painful impression that was not to be eradicated for nearly four years. The most powerful of all the neutrals, one of the greatest and most powerful of the nations of the earth, geographically and politically so situated that it could without fear of consequences be the world's spokesman, a nation that had always prided itself upon its love of humanity and justice and detested cruelty and wrongdoing, was content in this supreme crisis to be dumb, by its silence to condone the crimes of Germany; from crucified Belgium in her agony, seeking not assistance but the spiritual strength of sympathy, to turn aside with the measured words of official negation.

If Mr. Wilson was oppressed by doubt as to the correctness of his course or was sensitive to foreign criticism — and as a sensitive man he must have winced under the attacks that while seemingly justified were made without a knowledge of all the circumstances — Mr. Roosevelt's unexpected defense must have reassured him and brought the conviction that he had put in words what the great majority of Americans believed. Neither political nor personal consideration, as Mr. Wilson well knew, actuated Mr. Roosevelt. Politically Mr. Roosevelt belonged to the opposing party (and two years later was to try unsuccessfully to secure the nomination for the Presidency against Mr. Wilson), nor, as sometimes happens with political opponents, in their private relations

were they friends, each admiring the other because of common interests and the respect each had for the character of the other. Mr. Wilson knew that Mr. Roosevelt had expressed his honest conviction, that he was moved by no purpose other than to keep his country out of war and to be "the medium for bringing peace"; that the duty of the United States, as Mr. Roosevelt saw it, was to protect her own interests, — in all this agreeing absolutely with Mr. Wilson, who had done only what Mr. Roosevelt would have done under like circumstances; what Mr. Roosevelt would have done had Germany violated her treaties and ravaged Belgium in 1907, when he was President and it would have been incumbent upon him to receive the Belgian Commission and say in effect what Mr. Wilson said seven years later.

In his openly expressed admiration and respect for the German people, his tribute to their military efficiency, foresight and self-denial, his extenuation of the violation of international law and his plea that as Germany was fighting for her national existence against overwhelming odds her infraction of public or private morality must be regarded as a comparatively venial offense, Mr. Wilson further knew that Mr. Roosevelt, who as a private person had the right to say what he felt, who was a man of intense conviction and seldom retracted a judgment, was saying boldly and courageously what he sincerely believed and wanted the country to know so as to color its decision.

Mr. Wilson's course was in no sense dictated, or even influenced, by Mr. Roosevelt, because Mr. Wilson reached his conclusion and announced it a week before Mr. Roosevelt's article in the *Outlook* appeared, yet it must have brought satisfaction to Mr. Wilson, as Mr. Roosevelt, perhaps more than any other man, was the voice of the "common people", the great mass. What they thought, he so frequently said that he came to be regarded as *vox populi*. If, therefore, he could find excuse for Germany's conduct, if what Germany had done was no worse than what England and France had done, if he refused to sit in judgment on Germany, and inferentially asserted that Germany had a valid defense for the crimes of which she was alleged to be guilty, and, perhaps more important than all, that Germany was engaged not in a war of aggression and conquest but was forced into "a struggle for life", then it was certain that millions of Americans agreed with him and would be more than ever convinced there "was right on both sides", that it would be folly to be the partisan of either, and that self-interest required the maintenance of that strict neutrality which Mr. Wilson had advised and Mr. Roosevelt had so unreservedly approved.

It is not easy to measure the influence of any man when that influence is exercised unofficially. Precisely how great the influence of Mr. Roosevelt was in these early months of the war when America was bewildered, when she had not yet found herself and

was groping through the fog of controversy and selfishness, seeking the path of duty, it is impossible to tell; but it must be believed that Mr. Roosevelt, next to the President, was the most potent force to keep the United States neutral, to persuade the American people that self-interest demanded they abstain from war, to soften the abhorrence caused by Germany's bombing of hospitals, the desecration of the Red Cross, the murder of civilians, the burning and sacking of towns, the defilement of young girls, the mutilation of soldiers, and all the other outrages that ought to have set America aflame and in the name of humanity have united America in a protest that even Germany in her contemptuous brutality would not have dared disregard. That America was not united, that the holy fire of indignation was smothered, is not surprising in view of what has been told. Many months were to pass and many events were to happen before the counsel of prudence of September, 1914, was to be rejected and men were to give unselfish service and devotion to a great cause.

5

Mr. Wilson did not believe that the United States would be compelled to take up arms. He believed that the United States would be able to maintain friendly relations with all the belligerents and to serve them as no other nation could, and the only way this service could be rendered was to give no encourage-

ment to those Americans who demanded war, but through the force of suggestion and his appeal to intellect and emotion to keep before the public always the benefit to come from keeping the peace, and to make peace possible by harmonizing the racial jealousies and sympathies of his own people. But he viewed war as a possibility, remote, it is true, but still a possibility, and never to be dismissed as impossible. He was placed in a position of extreme difficulty. He could by making preparations, if not for war at least for defense, do the very thing he was anxious above all things to avoid, and what was then merely a possibility would become more than a probability. Any military measures he might have taken would immediately have aroused the distrust and suspicion of both belligerents, uncertain whether the United States was to be counted as an enemy or an ally; and at home, to the partisans of England and Germany, there could be only one meaning: the President was getting ready for war; both sides would have been certain he was their ally, and the effect would have been deplorable. This is based on the assumption, of course, that Congress and the country would have given the President *carte blanche* in money and legislation to bring the military forces up to the required strength and provide them with the guns, munitions and other articles in which they were totally deficient, asking neither accounting for the money expended nor explanation of the policy he intended to

pursue; or that Congress and the country would have made it clear to Germany that when the United States was ready it would declare war.

This is an unwarranted assumption. Certainly neither in 1914, nor in 1915, nor in 1916 would Congress have given the President the unlimited power that later he was to possess; nor would the country have sanctioned it even had Congress been willing to grant it. Had Mr. Wilson asked for money and authority to be used at his discretion and without rendering an explicit statement of what he proposed to do, his request would have been refused. Of that there can be no doubt. Neither Congress nor the country was in a mood for war nor for anything being done provocative of war. No less unwarranted is the assumption that at any time between August, 1914, and April, 1917, Mr. Wilson, had he been, as his opponents asserted, a more resolute and determined man, less wedded to his exaggerated love of peace, able to reach a quick decision instead of cautiously weighing and always postponing action, could have made war on Germany with a united country behind him. The proof that Mr. Wilson was powerless is to be found not only in the temper of the country, repeatedly exhibited, but also in the votes of Congress, where in both parties the adherents of Germany were numerous and actively hostile. More than once efforts were made to redress England's advantage of sea power legitimately exercised by a dishonest revision of in-

ternational law for the benefit of Germany, which, in effect, would have changed the status of the United States from neutrality to covert alliance with Germany; and the Administration was only saved from the most serious consequences by a narrow margin. Up to the very eve of war these conditions continued. War was declared against Germany on April 6, 1917, yet on the previous fourth of March, when Mr. Wilson made a last effort to avert war by declaring a state of armed neutrality against Germany, there were enough senators openly disloyal and undisguisedly the protectors of Germany to prevent the passage of the resolution. The declaration of war against Germany was resisted in both Houses of Congress, and in both Houses an opposition vote was recorded; likewise conscription was opposed and an attempt made to defeat the necessary legislation. It is quite true that at no time between August, 1914, and April, 1917, could a resolution declaring war against England have been adopted, but it is equally true that, until Germany actually forced war upon the United States, a declaration of war against Germany would have met the same end. To assume otherwise is either dishonesty or ignorance.

Mr. Wilson, in short, acted precisely as Lincoln did in 1861, and Lincoln was denounced by the extremists for shilly-shallying, for talking, for being afraid to act and giving encouragement to the South by his excessive caution, when had he been a real leader of men

he would have made war on twenty-four hours' notice. Lincoln had to do then what Mr. Wilson had to do half a century later. Lincoln was less concerned about his military strength than he was about his political solidarity; armies he knew could be raised, but without united political support the armies would be struck with paralysis; and Lincoln waited, with infinite patience he waited, submitting to unmerited abuse, never petulant or resentful; playing a part so admirable and yet so wise that even the men nearest to him did not appreciate his skill and tact and purpose; always shaping the thoughts of his people in the right direction until, certain at last the people were behind him, he struck. Under similar circumstances Mr. Wilson (who has been a close student of Lincoln and his political methods) had the same difficult part to play, but Lincoln's task was light compared to Mr. Wilson's. With Lincoln the period of suspense was a few months, with Wilson it was multiplied tenfold; Lincoln had to contend only with the South and the dissidents of the North; Wilson had to reckon with a foreign-born population nearly three times that of the South, and the avowed and secret sympathizers of Germany and the enemies of England in Congress and in every class of society in every State of the Union. Of that period in his country's history Mr. Wilson had written — and it sums up in a few words the precise mental attitude of his countrymen more than half a century later: "Policy had

to carry the people with it; had to await the awakening of the national idea into full consciousness; and this first pause of doubt and reflection did but render the ultimate outcome the more certain."

That Mr. Wilson from the first saw the great moral issue of the war has been made plain; that he saw the necessity of also making his people see the war not as affecting their material interests but as a question of morals we cannot doubt. Often he must have pondered the question and asked himself as he kept his vigil whether the thing that was clear to him could be made equally plain to his people; what he must do to bring to them understanding.

CHAPTER VIII

"Too Proud to Fight"

1

Seldom does one nation know another, and perhaps there were no two nations whose people had so little comprehension of the other as the English and the Americans until the war made them companions in arms and broke down all barriers. It was because no barriers were supposed to exist and they enjoyed the advantage of a common tongue that, paradoxically, raised the greatest barrier. Few Englishmen know a foreign language, and not knowing it they do not pretend to know the country; even if they speak the language they do not presume to know the country after visiting it for a few weeks. On both sides of the Atlantic this obstacle to intercourse was removed; customs were substantially the same, methods were not so different that they were "foreign", consequently neither American nor Englishman believed he had anything to learn. In England and America men who made a special study of foreign countries, who patiently learned their history and institutions and by observation and experience knew the temper of their peoples, were treated with the respect knowledge

commands; but in England and America the American or English specialist was regarded with suspicion and looked upon with distrust. The Englishman, the student of America, who was not blind to the faults of America and yet fair enough to recognize her merits, was, in the opinion of his countrymen, an unsafe mentor and an unreliable guide because he had become too "Americanized" and was more American than the Americans. The American in similar circumstances lost caste at home. He was that most despised of all beings, "un-American"; he was out of touch with his own country, and his former robust nationality had become corrupted and was now epicene. One has only to recall the contumely suffered by American ambassadors to England to find proof of what used to be the American attitude. Mr. Bayard was censured by the House of Representatives for having told the truth; Mr. Lowell was frequently attacked; and even at a time so recent as the McKinley Administration, Mr. Hay was criticized because he was able to admire England without betraying his own country.

In 1861 when the North was fighting in defense of human liberty and to vindicate a great political principle, Americans were indignant because Englishmen apparently cared nothing about the moral issues involved, — which Americans believed ought to appeal to them with peculiar force, — but were interested in the war only as it enabled them to make money or curtail profits. This was perhaps harsh judgment,

but natural. Motley, writing to the Duke of Argyll, in June, 1861, said: "The Americans would have scorned material aid. But they did expect sympathy. They thought that some voice in high places would have been lifted up to say, 'We are sorry for your trials; we are compelled to look on with folded arms, but your cause is noble. Our hearts are with you. You are right in resolving upon two things — first to prevent the further extension of the system of African slavery, which you had the constitutional power of doing; and secondly to maintain your nationality, your unity, which is all that saves you from anarchy and barbarism.' Instead of all this there came denunciation of the wickedness of civil war — as if the war had not been forced upon the Government." Lowell in "The Biglow Papers" put the same thought in doggerel when he wrote:

"We know we've got a cause, John,
That's honest, just and true;
We thought 't would win applause, John,
Ef nowheres else, from you."

And John was told that his mark was on the guns supplied to the Confederacy and all he cared about was his ten *per cent.*

It was now England who complained that Brother Jonathan's mark was on the cotton and meats and other things going to her enemy, and that all that Brother Jonathan cared about was profits of four hundred or five hundred *per cent*, Brother Jonathan's

ideas having considerably expanded since the late unpleasantness. Thousands of Englishmen, without exaggeration one may say the whole British Empire, felt as Motley did. England was not asking for material assistance, but she did expect sympathy. She knew her cause was just, she knew that the war was not of her seeking but had been forced upon her, she knew that she was fighting the battle of civilization and that the outcome of that battle would determine the future of America no less than that of England; that if England were to be enslaved and autocracy to rule the world America would lose her liberty and no longer enjoy the freedom for which she had fought. England hoped that some voice in high places would be lifted up, that despite official neutrality, the necessity of which she recognized, there would be men to give her the grasp of friendship and the comforting word of encouragement, to bid her be of good cheer and remember that the heart of America was with her. There were men in America who did this, just as Bright and Cobden half a century earlier had recognized that the North was right, had longed for its success and had not hesitated to say so; but Englishmen as a whole were selfish and indifferent, their newspapers caricatured and abused Mr. Lincoln, and Americans, with bitterness in their hearts, were compelled to read the same glorification of the South and its defense that Englishmen read in Mr. Roosevelt's *Outlook* article praising Germany for provoking

war, for her militarism and justifying her violation of international law.

2

England was placed at a further disadvantage, partly through her own density and incomprehension of American temperament, partly through the ironic accident of a vicious system. It has been said before, and it cannot be too often repeated, that to the American people as a whole the war was not their affair; it concerned neither their interests, their honor nor their national security, and that when Mr. Roosevelt said: "we have not the smallest responsibility for what has befallen" Belgium he put in words the dominant thought. It was a European and not an American war, and by no circumstance could America be drawn into it. That the war would be brought to America, that America would have to fight to defend her interests, that Germany would force war upon her as she had forced it upon England and France (and it must never be forgotten that Americans were not sure that Germany was the aggressor or that the guilt could not be in equal measure apportioned among all the belligerents), was to Americans impossible and inconceivable. Those Americans who knew the merits of the issue, who speculated even at that time whether America could remain unscathed, were few.

England had a good "case", but unfortunately it was not properly presented. Almost immediately

following the outbreak of the war the American press was deluged with the outpourings of English writers, the majority known in America as writers of fiction or clever essayists, but with no pretensions to a knowledge of politics, international law or history. England, Americans were told, was fighting as much for America as she was for herself, for which Americans ought to feel properly thankful. Americans could not see this, nor could they be made to believe it. Forming judgment from the information they possessed, they refused to accept biased statements that England was inspired by altruism, or that she was safeguarding America any more than she was protecting Peru. England was fighting in her own defense, which was legitimate and for which no American blamed her; but it was impertinent for Englishmen to remind America of an obligation she did not recognize, and naturally it was resented. In short, the effect of this badly organized propaganda, which was carried on without method or system and in ignorance of the temper of America, did very great harm; and the irritation it aroused was not allayed by the English taunt that all America cared for was to make profits by trading with the enemy; especially when it was known to Americans that England went into the war blithely declaring "business as usual"; and one of the leading Liberal newspapers of England opposed the war on the ground that if she remained neutral England could engage in the very profitable business

of selling munitions and other supplies to both belligerents.

A system that appoints men without the slightest regard for their fitness to cope with unanticipated conditions had sent to Washington in the year before the war as the diplomatic representative of Great Britain, when all that was required of a diplomatist to be successful was to be amiable and pay his social debts with punctilious exactitude, a man of many brilliant parts, witty, talented, likeable; who with equal facility wrote poetry that was touched with fire and coined epigrams that seared like fire, which he scattered with spendthrift prodigality; but who temperamentally and for other causes was quite unsuited for a post requiring the greatest tact, patience and good temper; who must be firm without giving offence and be able generously to yield when compliance is wisdom; who ought to have been sympathetic and able to understand the difficulties and the many delicate and complex problems which the Administration had to face. The stage was well set for tragedy.

3

At the outbreak of the war the British Navy contained the German fleet, which ceased to be a danger and became only the textbook menace of a fleet in being; and very soon Great Britain was to drive the German merchant marine off the seas and hold their undisputed possession. It was this control of ocean-

borne commerce and the power legitimately exercised to prevent contraband from reaching the enemy that brought England in sharp conflict with the United States in the opening months of the war and increased the feeling in the United States against England.

From the standpoint of selfish interest this was natural. Dependent upon foreign countries for raw materials vital to the prosecution of the war and with the seas closed to her own flag, Germany attempted to obtain what she required through neutrals, and as her needs were great she gladly offered to pay practically any price demanded. Not since the American Civil War had blockade running become so profitable. The profits were enormous and the risk was not great; at the worst the loss of cargo, sometimes of vessel as well as cargo; but the conveyance of contraband, while a violation of international law, was not a crime, the men engaged in it knew their lives were not forfeit when captured, and the profits were so great that ship owners could afford to take long chances. To Americans who had things to sell that Germany was anxious to buy, who knew that England and her Allies were buying in America and every other country whatever they needed, it seemed unfair and harmful; it deprived them of the profits to which they believed they were properly entitled, by being prevented from trading with Germany. At that time German propaganda was insidious; it was carried on not without ability and did very great harm because the British

Government took no measures to offset it and it was not incumbent on the United States to interfere. All that was required of the United States was to hold the ring and see that no foul blows were struck contrary to the rules of neutrality.

Mr. Wilson's position was to become increasingly difficult. He had seen that the war was not a contest of arms but a moral struggle; he hoped that this enlightenment might be brought to his own people, and he knew that if he was to make them see eye to eye with him, above all things his course must be strictly correct; he must be as impartial as the judgment of God; not by a hair's breadth must he swerve from the straight line or show the slightest favoritism. To do otherwise would be to lose his hold, to risk the imputation that instead of being the just judge he was the unfair partisan. His strength was to be his seeming weakness; that weakness the public so eagerly ascribed to him, the timidity that made him continually balance and strike an even score by charging one offense against another, that indecision that was always to prevent action when the course of action was so clearly mapped. It was perhaps a natural criticism when the motives that guided Mr. Wilson were not known and could not be revealed; it was the same charge brought against Lincoln, accused of inconsistency, of a weakness for compromising between right and wrong, and roundly abused for it by a public that always freely said what it thought. Nevertheless Mr. Wilson was

compelled to keep silent because his only hope of success lay in the nation being converted without knowing that the forces of conversion were at work. For Mr. Wilson boldly to have proclaimed: "I come as a missionary among you to be the means whereby you may be converted and embrace the true faith" would have been to invite scorn and defiance and defeat his purpose. But it was as a missionary he labored, and his converts were to be an entire people.

Controversies with Germany were from the beginning of a more serious nature than with Great Britain and were ultimately to lead to war, for with Germany they concerned the taking of life while with Great Britain they concerned merely the taking of or interference with property; but, curiously enough, it was not the criminal actions of Germany but the alleged illegal acts of England that aroused the deepest feeling in the United States. That the historian of the future, when all the evidence is presented and can be impartially reviewed, will exonerate England of illegality and bear generous tribute to her excessive moderation and forbearance no one can doubt, but the American people were not in a historical mood and were compelled to form judgment on imperfect knowledge. What they knew was that their vessels were being held up and searched and their cargoes were frequently seized and confiscated after trial in an English prize court, which it was natural for them, ignorant of the practice of international law, to regard as partial

and always ready to stretch the law and facts in favor of the British Government. The agents of Germany, tireless, unscrupulous, with unlimited means at their command to influence public opinion, adroitly fostered the discontent by dwelling on the arbitrary acts of England and contrasting the course of England and Germany. When Germany bombed hospitals or sunk an English ship, — which was denied or conveniently disposed of as an incident of war, — it brought no loss to Americans, but when England seized a rich cargo Americans suffered a heavy financial loss; and while Germany was longing to pour her wealth into America through the purchase of American goods England was the dog in the manger who barred the way, not because she might have to go without, as there was enough for both, but out of pure selfishness. She wanted to punish Germany, and she was envious of America's good fortune; she begrudged the money America was making and dreaded the future when America would be a keener trade rival. It is not surprising that many Americans should have honestly believed that England's course was less honorable than Germany's, and that it was England and not Germany with whom eventually they might have to reckon.

Because of the policy he was pursuing, furthermore because of the duty he believed was imposed upon the United States to champion and protect the rights of neutrals and safeguard the accepted principles

of international law, Mr. Wilson felt it incumbent upon him to bring to the attention of the British Government what his legal advisers, — whose vision was then limited by claiming the rights neutrals are always insistent upon in time of war, — asserted to be infractions of the code of nations. The exchange of notes began in the early days of the war and continued with little cessation during the next two years. On December 26, 1914, Mr. Bryan, as Secretary of State, found it necessary to send a long dispatch to the British Government, couched in a friendly tone but firmly stating the American position; the condition of American foreign trade having become "so serious as to require a candid statement of the views of this Government in order that the British Government may be fully informed as to the attitude of the United States toward the policy which has been pursued by the British authorities during the present war." The commerce of nonbelligerents, Mr. Bryan asserted, ought not to be interfered with by belligerents unless that interference was imperatively necessary for national safety. Disavowing any selfish desire to gain undue commercial advantage, the American Government was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the British policy toward neutral ships and cargoes "exceeds the manifest necessity of a belligerent and constitutes restrictions upon the rights of American citizens upon the high seas which are not justified by the rules of international law or

required under the principle of self-preservation." The situation created was, Mr. Bryan represented, a critical one to the commercial interests of the United States, suffering because their products were denied access to long established neutral European markets, and he relied upon the British sense of justice to remove the difficulties and obstacles placed in the way of American commerce.

"In conclusion," Mr. Bryan wrote, "it should be impressed upon His Majesty's Government that the present condition of American trade with the neutral European countries is such that, if it does not improve, it may arouse a feeling contrary to that which has so long existed between the American and British peoples. Already it is becoming more and more the subject of public criticism and complaint. There is an increasing belief, doubtless not entirely unjustified, that the present British policy toward American trade is responsible for the depression in certain industries which depend upon European markets. The attention of the British Government is called to this possible result of their present policy to show how widespread the effect is upon the industrial life of the United States and to emphasize the importance of removing the cause of complaint."

The effect this dispatch produced upon the English mind can be easily imagined. Any doubt existing that the interest the United States had in the war was measured by its profits was now dispelled.

4

On the seventh of May, 1915, the *Lusitania* was torpedoed. Before that Germany had committed more atrocious crimes, since then the atrocities of which Germany has been guilty make the sinking of the *Lusitania* trivial, but nothing that Germany has done so profoundly affected the moral sense of the entire world. In America there went up a cry for vengeance; many persons who had conscientiously obeyed the President's injunction to be neutral in thought and action now openly proclaimed their detestation of Germany and felt that the United States must, to preserve her own self-respect and dignity and in vindication of the rights of humanity, declare war on Germany. But the President remained unmoved. He sat in the White House a solitary and lonely figure (Mrs. Wilson had died two days after England declared war), listening to the growing storm; listening and pondering and waiting. He knew of the mounting excitement, he knew that nothing would be more gratifying to the men who had been the partisans of England from the first than the uniting of their country with England and France in the war against Germany; he knew that the torpedo fired by a German submarine commander had become a powerful agent in bringing the moral issue home to the nation; he knew he had but to speak, and the indifferent and the apathetic would be quickened and they would join in the demand for war; but he

also knew, and perhaps no man knew it so well as he, that the destruction of the *Lusitania* had not united his people. There were still two camps, the partisans of Germany had not been converted; Americans who believed the war was none of their affair were shaken, but not convinced. And he knew that to go to war with a divided country was impossible. Moreover he had not abandoned hope that the United States could be kept out of the war; and while from the depths of the Atlantic the dead of the *Lusitania* besought him that they be not forgotten, and he was resolved that never should they be forgotten and in the fullness of time their murder should be expiated,[1] he still cherished the faith that policy might so shape events that the toll of American life would not have to be increased.

Some days before the *Lusitania* had been sent to the bottom Mr. Wilson had accepted an invitation to address a meeting of newly naturalized citizens in Philadelphia on the evening of May 10. It was known of course that the Government of the United States could not permit such a gross violation of international law as the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the murder of its citizens to go unnoticed, and the public eagerly awaited the President's action, speculating whether it would be such a vigorous demand on Germany for reparation

[1] See the President's speech delivered at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, September 27, 1918: "Our brothers from many lands, as well as our own murdered dead under the sea, were calling to us, and we responded, fiercely and of course."

and assurances that the crime would not be repeated that, virtually, it would be an ultimatum and force the United States into the war on the side of the Allies, or whether Mr. Wilson would be content to engage in a diplomatic duel with Germany. Mr. Wilson gave no sign. In accordance with his custom at a time of crisis he withdrew from practically all contact with his official advisers or public men; isolated and aloof, perhaps seeking spiritual guidance, — as Lincoln did more than once and Robert E. Lee is known to have spent the night in prayer before his duty was revealed to him that his allegiance was to his State and not to his Government, — Mr. Wilson took counsel of himself but none other, and the people believed he would reveal himself in the forthcoming speech.

For a man so well balanced and mentally so nicely poised as Mr. Wilson, who keeps himself well under restraint and thinks with such clearness that his thoughts are always translated into the simplest and most direct language, it is curious that more than once he has lapsed into the same "blazing indiscretions" that gave the late Lord Salisbury his reputation. In asking Congress to repeal the exemption clause of the Panama Canal Act Mr. Wilson, it will be recalled, said: "I ask this of you in support of the foreign policy of the Administration. I shall not know how to deal with other matters of even greater delicacy and nearer consequence if you do not grant it to me in ungrudging measure;" and in view of the

strained relations then existing with Mexico and Japan, Congress and the country naturally concluded that the situation was even more critical than they suspected, and patriotism demanded instant submission to the President's demand. Had Mr. Wilson a less direct and more tortuous mind, "thinking tortuous thoughts, naught honest, but all roundabout", did he delight in seeming frankness to conceal subtle designs, one might believe that he deliberately used words susceptible of more than one interpretation, but that theory can be dismissed without further question. Some months after Mr. Wilson made his address to Congress he said that his words on that occasion had been misunderstood; and his explanation throws an illuminating light on his character. At that time Mr. Wilson received the Washington correspondents twice a week and in the course of informal conversation told them such things as he considered it advisable for them to know; these conversations were not published *verbatim*, but a stenographic report was taken and filed in the White House archives. With the consent of the President the report was published that clarified the misunderstanding. Mr. Wilson said that in using the language he did when asking Congress to repeal the exemption clause he was not thinking of any situation immediately critical, but what he had in mind was a situation that might arise in the future, that might be more critical and more delicate than that which confronted him at the time

he spoke, and the shameful position in which the United States would be placed if the world believed that the United States made treaties, accepted in good faith by other nations, and then construed them to suit her own convenience or advantage. It was, in short, an appeal to Congress not to consider material gain but to respect a moral obligation, so to act toward the world that the United States need suffer no loss of self-respect or feel the reproach of the world believing that the United States would gladly sacrifice its honor to secure an unworthy bargain. More than once Mr. Wilson was to do this same thing; to think in larger terms of the future while the public was thinking in the smaller things of the present, and thereby to confuse and anger the public; and now he was about to do it even more dramatically, with its attendant consequences of greater confusion and more lasting and deep-seated anger.

Mr. Wilson prepared his speech before the news of the sinking of the *Lusitania* reached him; segregated, he still had means of knowing the temper of the country, and he must have known with what intense anxiety the world awaited his deliverance and the construction that would be put on his every word. The speech as written was not changed. He repeated what he had said many times since his election; he dwelt upon the mission of America to humanize the world, its duty to set an example of peace to the world; he pictured America created to unite men and to elevate

mankind, dwelling especially, as applicable to his audience, on the obligation of every man to dedicate himself to America and to leave all other countries behind, and then he astonished every one and amazed the country no less than the entire world by saying:

"The example of America must be a special example. The example of America must be the example not merely of peace because it will not fight, but of peace because peace is the healing and elevating influence of the world and strife is not. There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right."

That was the only reference to the thing that engrossed all men. The President's speech was published in full in the leading newspapers, but that sentence — "there is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight" — stripped of its context, was singled out; it was flung on telegraph wires and cables to the far corners of the earth, and it was accepted by the world as the President's reply to Germany. Germany had sunk the *Lusitania*, Germany had murdered American men and women and little children, and America, speaking through her President, could find no word of scorn or condemnation for the guilty, no pity for the dead, no promise they should be avenged; it could feel no generous prompting of passion, but was content proudly to glory in her cowardice.

Bitterly attacked in his own country, lampooned,

satirized and jeered at abroad, any other man temperamentally different would have offered explanation or defense, or at least through his friends sought to soften the harsh judgment of the world and make it plain that what he said and the interpretation given to it did him an injustice. Mr. Wilson did nothing. With what might very well have been thought the superb indifference of disdain, with what the public might very well believe was utter contempt for what it said or thought or believed, — but which, in fact, was an extraordinary exhibition of courage and self-control, — Mr. Wilson dismissed the matter as if it were too trivial to require further attention. He had unlimited confidence, it was a confidence almost fatalistic, in the ultimate triumph of right and reason and the victory of morality in the long struggle. Lincoln, we are told, as an advocate of the abolition of slavery and prohibition saw that they could not be hastened, that they could be safely agitated but must not be prematurely pressed, and it was wisdom to wait until "in God's own time they will be organized into law and thus be woven into the fabric of our institutions." Mr. Wilson had the more difficult task not to crystallize moral sentiment into law, which is the foundation on which all law rests, for in a free country law is simply the concrete expression of morality, but to weld passion, prejudice and self-interest into a great moral renunciation.

There is a curious thing in connection with the

President's use of the phrase "too proud to fight" which is worth mention and is of interest to the psychologist. Mr. Wilson is a Southerner by birth, descent and tradition, and although all his life from early manhood has been lived in the North, heredity is ineradicable. To the Southerner, especially the Southerner of the generation of Mr. Wilson's childhood, "proud" has a different meaning and is used in a different sense than it is by the Northerner. Men of the North seldom talk about their pride; men of the South frequently do, and they mean not pride in the Shaksperian sense, but in the same sense that the American of the North or the Englishman does self-respect. A Southerner will say, "I am too proud to do it," a Northerner or an Englishman would say, "My self-respect will not allow it." It was undoubtedly in that sense Mr. Wilson, subconsciously reacting to his Southern heritage, used "proud", meaning that there are occasions when a nation, no matter how great the temptation, must not fight, just as an individual, to save his own self-respect, must not engage in a brawl.

It will not be necessary critically to consider the long correspondence that passed between the American and German Governments, but the sinking of the *Lusitania* brought the first break in Mr. Wilson's Cabinet and led to the resignation of Mr. Bryan on the following eighth of June. "In a country of complex foreign relations," says Bagehot, "it would mostly

happen that the first and most critical year of every war would be managed by a peace Premier," and Mr. Wilson in this first critical year found himself burdened with a peace Secretary of State. Mr. Bryan was no greater lover of peace than Mr. Wilson; both men were pacifists as the term had been used in the days when statesmen loudly denied their love of militarism and asked support because of their attachment to peace; both men detested war and to them hate among nations was criminal and an offense against the Christ they served, but there was a marked difference between the statesmanship of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan and his duty as each conceived it. On the common platform of peace they could meet, but Mr. Bryan would stick to his platform and expose himself to bullets, refusing to fire a shot in his own protection, while Mr. Wilson knew when the time had come to leave the platform and pick up the weapon at hand that even the most zealous pacifist may not despise if he is not to permit his principles to become folly. Under no circumstances could Mr. Bryan be made to fight; Mr. Wilson was trying to avoid being forced to fight, but he would not run from it. Mr. Bryan's position in the Cabinet of Mr. Wilson became impossible, and he resigned to be succeeded by Mr. Robert Lansing.

CHAPTER IX

The Evangelist

1

Events were rapidly bringing about a situation to cause Mr. Wilson the gravest concern. The sinking of the *Lusitania* and other vessels by Germany, the never-ceasing friction with England because of her alleged interference with the rights of American and neutral commerce, the horror and detestation Americans had for Germany because of her crimes on land and sea and the way in which she made war in defiance of all moral and international law; the growing solidification of the American people into the partisans of England or Germany; the efforts almost without concealment of Germans in America to fight for Germany in the United States by destroying factories having British Government contracts, sinking ships, equipping expeditions and in numerous other criminal ways attempting to violate the neutrality of the United States, made the observance of neutrality increasingly difficult.

The contempt in which the Administration was held by those Americans who from the beginning had been the supporters of England and since the sinking of the

Lusitania with growing bitterness and violence denounced the President for not having declared war; the temper of Congress, where in both parties England was defended and defamed and Germany was protected and attacked; the vehemence of the press, which had ceased to be neutral and was either the outspoken champion of England or equally without disguise upheld the cause of Germany, or, too cowardly to take a positive stand and risk losing advertisers or offending subscribers, professed impartiality by alternately attributing responsibility for the war to both belligerents, or tried to curry favor with both sides by expressing no views and holding no opinions showed the dangerous state of public sentiment. Mr. Wilson still hoped neutrality could be maintained, but while the Government continued to be officially neutral, the country, Mr. Wilson well knew, had ceased to be neutral either in thought or action.

It was not sufficient to allow time to shape destiny, patiently to wait in the hope that an awakened conscience would make men no longer content to palter with morality. Passionate resentment on the one side was met with lethargic indifference on the other, and to the great mass of Americans the war still remained none of their business. Better than any other man Mr. Wilson knew the temperament of his own people, the springs that moved them, the ideals they cherished, and he had sufficient confidence in the correctness of his appraisement of their character to believe that if

he could make them see that the whole character of the war had changed, that he himself saw it in a new light, that it was no longer a war as the world hitherto had always thought about war, to satisfy the ambition of kings, or to appease national pride, or to gain by conquest what could not be gained in any other way, but it was a war of principle, a war that threatened freedom and imperiled liberty and the democracy that was the foundation of American institutions, the American people would no more hesitate, but would be as resolute for war and gladly make whatever sacrifice was necessary in supporting the Allied cause as, at the beginning of their history, they had fought against royal tyranny and legislative oppression, and, in the following century, again had taken up arms in defense of human liberty and to maintain the principle of their political unity. This they must be made to see, not only to see but to feel; before they would draw the sword, in them must be the spirit of the crusader; they must be made to fight for an idea no less than an ideal and in a spirit of knight errantry go forth to battle.

It was no easy thing to do. In his dispatch to the British Government in December, 1914, Mr. Bryan had stressed British interference with neutral trade and the heavy financial loss to American interests. Immediately following the outbreak of the war American bankers and merchants, heavily indebted to England, were required to make provision to meet

their obligations, normal trade between America and England was dislocated, business between America and neutrals came virtually to a standstill, commerce between America and Germany and Austria practically ceased; sterling exchange went to a prohibitive price, the commerce of the whole world was in confusion; in America men were uncertain as to the future, it was a time for caution, business came almost to a halt until the skies lifted; it looked as if America was in for a bad time and was facing hardship and distress. But this period of semi-panic and fear lasted only a short time and the skies soon lifted. It was not long before the British Government began to place huge contracts in the United States, and a few months later Great Britain, France and Russia were buying on an enormous scale, recklessly and stupidly bidding against each, buying without any regard to system or value but in their desperation and haste willingly paying almost any price demanded, their needs being largely in excess of the supply. The whole world was looking to America. Not only were the belligerents supplementing their inadequate means of production with the resources of the new world, buying not alone munitions but foodstuffs and raw materials, but the neutrals, their normal channels closed to them, were compelled to turn to America, purchasing on their own account or acting as the agents of Germany, engaged in a trade so profitable that there was no haggling about price, and whatever

the conscience of Americans permitted them to ask was paid without demur. It is not a figure of speech touched with the fancy of rhetoric, but as matter of fact as the subject itself, that a golden stream flowed across the Atlantic and gave new life and strength not alone to the factories and industrial plants of America but also to her agriculture, her mines, her forests and her railways. The effect was quickly seen. The surplus of unemployed labor was turned into a scarcity of skilled workingmen, wages and prices rapidly advanced, speculation in "war babies" was rampant, huge fortunes were made overnight and a new crop of millionaires blossomed; America was enjoying prosperity such as before she had never known. To depart slightly from chronology and anticipate events, from early in 1915 and throughout the whole of 1916 America played in the Pactolian sands. England, France and Russia, and later Italy, were not only buying in the United States but also borrowing, enriching bankers with handsome commissions and paying heavy interest for the money advanced, which was used not to pay their own nationals but paid to American manufacturers and workingmen for munitions and supplies; and when they had drained themselves of their gold they sent back to the United States American stocks and bonds, either to be sold or to be used as collateral to sustain their credit. From being a debtor nation at the beginning of the war the whole world was now creditor to the United States.

Never perhaps had there been such extravagance, such luxury, such lavish expenditure, such lightheartedness, such a feverish craving for amusement. The public was obsessed with the craze for enjoyment in the glare of publicity and measured pleasure by its cost. In all the large cities the *cabaret* and the expensive and garish restaurant, with dancing as much a matter of course as the food, were nightly crowded until the early hours of the morning, and as the evenings were not long enough to satisfy the dancing mania, tea dances were introduced and became equally the fashion. Women accustomed to pay extravagantly for dresses and furs were aghast at the prices now asked, but they paid without question, for money was plentiful and must be spent. In some of the large Western cities at Christmas, always a time when the pocketbook is freely opened, jewelers advertised lavishly that "this is a diamond year" and "now is the time to buy jewelry", and the public spent fabulous sums for jewels and other presents. The opera and the theaters were never so well patronized. At no time had the rich and the fashionable entertained so freely, or with so little restraint indulged their caprices or taste in providing their friends costly food and drink. Nor was it only the idle rich and the fashionable of the large cities, always a class by themselves, who went this pace. They set the pace, it is true, but all classes of society were quick to imitate them. The normally staid and dull middle-aged

man of the middle class learned to dance and took his feverish pleasure at the less pretentious *cabaret*, the pert little stenographer and her "boy" danced like all the rest of them; the munition workers of the great industrial centers, making extraordinarily high wages, were buying expensive clothes and having luxuries hitherto longed for but never believed possible to be possessed; the Western farmer, with a market practically at his own price for wheat and horses and cattle, was rich as never before; the cotton planter of the South in a few months went from poverty to affluence. In every part of the country the same story was repeated; money was being made quickly and spent freely.

Indifferent as Americans might be to the war they were not indifferent to what the war meant to them. So long as the war lasted money must come to America, whose great profits would continue if America remained neutral, but the position would be changed if she abandoned her neutrality and became a belligerent. Distinctly then the war was very much a matter of business, and it would be folly, it would show very poor business sense, to dam up the golden stream by taking part in a war in Europe whose outcome could not in any way touch America. Whether Germany won or was defeated America would not be affected. The only statesmanship the public understood was peace with war profits.

2

Mr. Wilson was now to become the evangelist. He was to have the whole world as his congregation. He was to be sneered at, derided, defamed, but he was not to be swerved. He entered now upon a new phase of his career, more striking than any previous period of his life. He went about preaching his new gospel; he began deliberately to preach the doctrine of morality, his words often falling on negligent ears, but to preach it without avowing his purpose, rather, in fact, trying to conceal it; by indirection to convey suggestion; to lead by precept rather than by argument; to repeat and constantly to repeat the same theme, frequently to weary his audience by his persistence, but by his singleness of design to provoke discussion, to stir sluggish thought, to force his adherents to defense and to invite the attack of his opponents; but always to compel the people, unconsciously, often unwillingly, to question the moral meaning of the war, and thus to make them see, as he intended they should see, the war in a new aspect.

He became the greatest propagandist the modern world has known, displaying extraordinary skill and dexterity and cunning, using that word not in its corrupted acceptance but in its original meaning. He was a gentle zealot; with words of love and forbearance on his lips he came to bring peace and comfort and not to unloose the flaming sword. There was no fire in his words, rarely flights of eloquence in

what he said. He spoke with simplicity and directness, using only the short and everyday words that every great teacher and leader of men has known how to use so that a profound thought or a great moral precept can be made sensible to men of little intelligence. His language was the plain speech of the masses, but it was like steel striking on steel in a vaulted chamber, to echo and reverberate and fill the lambent air with the beating pulses of a note that was quiet but never silent.

Between the day of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the day he went before Congress to ask for a declaration of war against Germany Mr. Wilson delivered many addresses, some of them seemingly remote from the war and having no connection with it, but whenever he spoke he appealed to the American people to cast selfishness aside and with no expectation of reward and only the consciousness of service as their reward help to bind the wounds of a stricken world. The limitations of space will permit only a few brief quotations taken at random, but these are sufficient to show how Mr. Wilson was molding American thought and making it impossible for Americans to avoid thinking about the one subject from which there could be no escape. Thus in an address at Indianapolis on January 8, 1915, he said: "May we not look forward to the time when we shall be called blessed among the nations because we succored the nations of the world in their time of distress and dis-

may? I for one pray God that that solemn hour may come, and I know the solidity of character, and I know the exaltation of hope, I know the high principle with which the American people will respond to the call of the world for this service, and I thank God that those who believe in America, who try to serve her people, are likely to be also what America herself from the first intended to be, the servant of mankind." In a brief address to the Methodist Episcopal Conference in Washington on March 25, 1915, the President said: "So I look upon you in the present circumstances as a great part of the stabilizer of the nation." Explaining the functions of the recently invented aeroplane stabilizer to determine the plane upon which the machine is to move, the President said: "Something like that is the function of the great moral forces of the world — to act as stabilizers even when we go up in the air. . . . The President is what the American nation sustains, and if it does not sustain him, then his power is contemptible and insignificant. If I can speak for you and represent you and in some sense hand on the moral forces that you represent, then I am indeed powerful; if I cannot, then I am indeed weak. . . . This is a council of peace, not to form plans of peace, for it is not our privilege to form such, but to proclaim the single supreme plan of peace, the relation of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Mr. Wilson had publicly proclaimed his spiritual

guidance. It was not the first time that he had invoked the favor of the Almighty, and more than once it had been asked whether to Mr. Wilson religion was simply a conventionality or part of his life. Men who know him best and have been given opportunities to form a judgment, say that Mr. Wilson is deeply religious. He is, says one observer, a Scotch Presbyterian, a Cromwellian, but with none of the austerity of the Covenanter; in him the fanaticism of his forbears has been softened and made gentle; he sees that existence is a perfectly ordered scheme. Less concerned about dogma or doctrine than the true spirit of Christianity, for between life and doctrine, Mr. Wilson said in one of his addresses, there is no real antithesis; a man "lives upon a doctrine, upon a principle, upon an idea"; unconcerned about creeds and tolerant of formularies, the Supreme Being is not terrible and vengeful, always demanding retribution, but a loving Father, kind, forbearing, generous. Mr. Wilson, says this same observer, is that rare person in politics whose existence has often been denied, a Christian and a gentleman; and he adds another intimate touch worth recording. Mr. Wilson is, what few persons imagine, a shy man, sensitive to the extreme, and it is this shyness and sensitiveness that have given him his undeserved reputation for coldness and aloofness, in delighting to keep the public at arm's length and neither desiring nor making friends. It is not that he is unresponsive, but he has the timid-

ity of the shy, almost diffident man who must always struggle against his reserve and is constitutionally incapable of letting his real feelings or emotions be seen except by the very few enjoying a peculiarly intimate association.

When in April, 1914, Mr. Wilson determined that he had no alternative except to seize Vera Cruz he called a meeting of his Cabinet. In effect he was about to make war on Mexico, and although it would have been a petty war as the world to-day has been taught war, then it loomed large as war; the step Mr. Wilson was about to take was portentous and its solemnity impressed him. Having explained what he proposed to do, he said to the men sitting around the table, with quiet earnestness and with a sincerity no one could doubt, that if any of them still believed in the efficacy of prayer he hoped they would think very solemnly over this matter. Probably the only member of the Cabinet who was not startled was Mr. Bryan, who always consistently endeavored to shape his life according to the teachings of his Master, but to the other members, more worldly although religious, this dramatic reminder, but without a suggestion of theatricalism, that man was merely an instrument in the hands of God, produced a profound impression and convinced them that the President had not taken this momentous decision without having first narrowly searched his conscience, and his spirit had been strengthened by the conviction he was committing no trespass.

3

On the eighth of April, 1915, Mr. Wilson welcomed the annual Conference of the Maryland Methodist Protestant Church assembled in Washington, and although his address was extremely brief, he struck even a deeper note than in his address before the Methodist Episcopal Conference. It would seem, he said, as if great, blind material forces had been released which had long been held in restraint, and yet underneath could be seen the strong impulses of great ideals. It would be impossible for men to go through what men are going through on the great battlefields of Europe and struggle through the present dark night of their terrible struggle if it were not that they saw, or thought that they saw, the broadening of light where the morning should come up and believed that they were standing each on his side of the contest for some eternal principle of right.

"Then all about them, all about us, there sits the silent, waiting tribunal which is going to utter the ultimate judgment upon this struggle, the great tribunal of the opinion of the world; and I fancy that I see, I hope that I see, I pray that it may be that I do truly see, great spiritual forces lying waiting for the outcome of this thing to assert themselves, and asserting themselves even now, to enlighten our judgment and steady our spirits." We wish to see certain things triumph, the President said, but why do we wish to see them triumph, and what is there in them

for the lasting benefit of mankind? "For we are not in this world to amuse ourselves with its affairs. We are here to push the whole sluggish mass forward in some particular direction, and unless you know the direction in which you want to go your force is of no avail.

"Do you love righteousness? is what each one of us ought to ask himself, and if you love righteousness, are you ready to translate righteousness into action and be ashamed and afraid before no man? It seems to me, therefore, that it is worth suggesting to you that you are not sitting here merely to transact the business and express the ideals of a great church, as represented in the State of Maryland, but you are here also as part of the assize of humanity, to remind yourselves of the things that are permanent and eternal which, if we do not translate into action, we have failed in the fundamental things of our lives."

At Arlington Cemetery, on May 31, 1915, the President said: "We live in our visions. We live in the things that we see. We live, and the hope abounds in us as we live, in the things that we purpose. Let us go away from this place renewed in our devotion to daily duty and to those ideals which keep a nation young, keep it noble, keep it rich in enterprise and achievement; make it to lead the nations of the world in those things that make for hope and for the benefit of mankind."

Speaking at the Annual Encampment of the Grand

Army of the Republic, in Washington, on September 28, 1915, Mr. Wilson said: "But for my own part I would not be proud of the extraordinary physical development of this country, of its extraordinary development in material wealth and financial power, did I not believe that the people of the United States wished all of this power devoted to ideal ends. There have been other nations as rich as we; there have been other nations as powerful; there have been other nations as spirited; but I hope that we shall never forget that we created this nation, not to serve ourselves but to serve mankind."

Twice during 1915 Mr. Wilson addressed in Washington the Daughters of the American Revolution. On the first occasion, April 19, he said, "We are interested in the United States, politically speaking, in nothing but human liberty." Warning his audience against forming judgment based on impulse or prejudice, the President continued: "We cannot afford to sympathize with anybody or anything except the passing generations of human beings. America forgets what she was born for when she does exactly the way every other nation does — when she loses her recollection of her main object, as sometimes nations do and sometimes perhaps she herself has done, in pursuing some immediate and transitory object. . . . I ask you to rally to the cause which is dearer in my estimation than any other cause, and that is the cause of righteousness as ministered to by those who

hold their minds quiet and judge according to principle. . . . We should ultimately wish to be justified by our own consciences and by the standards of our own national life."

On the second time, on October 11, 1915, Mr. Wilson said: "Neutrality is a negative word. It is a word that does not express what America ought to feel. America has a heart, and that heart throbs with all sorts of intense sympathies, but America has schooled its heart to love the things that America believes in, and it ought to devote itself only to the things that America believes in, and, believing that America stands apart in its ideals, it ought not to allow itself to be drawn, so far as its heart is concerned, into anybody's quarrel. Not because it does not understand the quarrel, not because it does not in its head assess the merits of the controversy, but because America has promised the world to stand apart and maintain certain principles of action which are grounded in law and justice. We are not trying to keep out of trouble; we are trying to preserve the foundations upon which peace can be rebuilt. Peace can be rebuilt only upon the ancient and accepted principles of international law, only upon the things which remind nations of their duties to each other, and deeper than that, of their duties to mankind and humanity.

"America has a great cause which is not confined to the American continent. It is the cause of humanity itself. I do not mean in anything I say even to imply

a judgment upon any nation or upon any policy, for my object here this afternoon is not to sit in judgment upon anybody but ourselves as to challenge you to assist all of us who are trying to make America conscious of nothing so much as her own principles and duty."

"The extraordinary circumstances of such a time have done much to quicken our national consciousness and deepen and confirm our confidence in the principles of peace and freedom by which we have always sought to be guided," Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1915.

At Columbus, Ohio, on December 10, 1915, the President said: "I believe that thoughtful men of every country and of every sort will insist that, when we get peace again, we shall have guarantees that it will remain, and that the instrumentalities of justice will be exalted above the instrumentalities of force. I believe that . . . if America preserves her poise, preserves her self-possession, preserves her attitude of friendliness toward all the world, she may have the privilege, whether in one form or another, of being the mediating influence by which these things may be induced."

At the Manhattan Club, New York City, on November 4, 1915, the President said: "We shall, I confidently believe, never again take another foot of territory by conquest. We shall never in any circumstances seek to make an independent people sub-

ject to our dominion; because we believe, we passionately believe, in the right of every people to choose their own allegiance and be free of masters altogether. . . . The mission of America in the world is essentially a mission of peace and good will among men."

In New York, May 17, 1915: "The interesting and inspiring thing about America is that she asks nothing for herself except what she has a right to ask for humanity itself. It is not pretension on our part to say that we are privileged to stand for what every nation would wish to stand for and speaking for those things which all humanity must desire . . . solemn evidence that the force of America is the force of moral principle, that there is not anything else that she loves and that there is not anything else for which she will contend."

Before the Associated Press in New York, on April 20, 1915, Mr. Wilson elaborated the position of and the duty imposed upon his country. "We have rolling between us and those bitter days across the water three thousand miles of cool and silent ocean. Our atmosphere is not yet charged with those disturbing elements which must be felt and must permeate every nation of Europe. Therefore, is it not likely that the nations of the world will some day turn to us for the cooler assessment of the elements engaged?" Disclaiming any intention to sit in judgment, because no nation is fit to sit in judgment on any other, the time must inevitably come when "we shall some

day have to assist in reconstructing the processes of peace." The position of America made her more and more the mediating nation of the world, "and we must have our judgments prepared and our spirits chastened against the coming of that day." The duty of America was "to think of America before we think of Europe, in order that America may be fit to be Europe's friend when the day of tested friendship comes. The test of friendship is not now sympathy with the one side or the other, but getting ready to help both sides when the struggle is over."

The basis of neutrality as Mr. Wilson defined it "is not indifference; it is not self-interest. The basis of neutrality is sympathy for mankind. It is fairness, it is good will at bottom. It is impartiality of spirit and of judgment. . . . I am interested in neutrality because there is something so much greater to do than fight, because there is something, there is a distinction waiting for this nation that no nation has ever yet got. That is the distinction of absolute self-control and self-mastery. . . . I covet for America this splendid courage of reserve moral force. . . . We are trustees for what I venture to say is the greatest heritage that any nation ever had, the love of justice and righteousness and human liberty. For, fundamentally, these are the things to which America is addicted and to which she is devoted."

"There marches that great host which has brought us to the present day; the host that has never forgot-

ten the vision which it saw at the birth of the nation; the host which always responds to the dictates of humanity and of liberty." "Flag Day", Washington, June 14, 1915.

"America is great in the world, not as she is a successful government merely, but as she is the successful embodiment of a great ideal of unselfish citizenship. That is what makes the world feel America draw it like a lodestone. . . . That is the light that shines from America. God grant that it may always shine." Speech before the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, at Columbus, Ohio, December 11, 1915.

4

The accusation of inconsistency has frequently been brought against Mr. Wilson; he has been charged with holding principles so lightly that they yield easily to the pressure of popular demand; that, in short, statesmanship, as he views it, is opportunism reduced to a science. Opportunism, in its larger sense, can be base and disgraceful, or it can be the rarest self-control and the wisest statesmanship. One of his biographers has said of Lincoln that it is certain he trained himself to be a great student of the fitting opportunity. Whether Mr. Wilson consciously, with deliberate intent, trained himself with a similar purpose it is impossible to say, but his whole public life is proof that he knew when and how to use his

opportunity to accomplish a great purpose, and that his seeming inconsistency, of which we have more than one instance, was intellectual pliability, the honesty and courage to admit an error and to feel no shame in candidly confessing it.

When Congress met in December, 1914, the war then having been waging for four months, many men were seriously disturbed about the defenseless position of the United States and believed national security demanded that immediate action be taken to increase the military and naval forces, which had the vigorous support of some of the most influential newspapers of the country. Addressing Congress on the eighth of December, Mr. Wilson, then not desiring to give any encouragement to the thought of America being in danger of becoming a belligerent, with as near a display of heat as he had shown in any of his utterances up to that time, forcibly denied that military preparation was necessary or that the slightest danger confronted America. Frankly admitting that the country was not prepared for war and that if it were necessary to resist attack the means would be found without compulsory military service, he said:

"Allow me to speak with great plainness and directness upon this great matter and to avow my convictions with deep earnestness. I have tried to know what America is, what her people think, what they are, what they most cherish and hold dear. I hope that some of their finer passions are in my own heart,

— some of the great conceptions and desires which gave birth to this Government and which have made the voice of this people a voice of peace and hope and liberty among the peoples of the world, and that, speaking my own thoughts, I shall, at least in part, speak theirs also, however faintly and inadequately, upon this vital matter.

"We are at peace with all the world. No one who speaks counsel based on fact or drawn from a just and candid interpretation of realities can say that there is reason to fear that from any quarter our independence or the integrity of our territory is threatened. Dread of the power of any other nation we are incapable of. We are not jealous of rivalry in the fields of commerce or of any other peaceful achievement. We mean to live our own lives as we will; but we mean also to let live. We are, indeed, a true friend of all the nations of the world, because we threaten none, covet the possessions of none, desire the overthrow of none. Our friendship can be accepted and is accepted without reservation, because it is offered in a spirit and for a purpose which no one need ever question or suspect. Therein lies our greatness. We are the champions of peace and of concord. And we should be very jealous of this distinction which we have sought to earn. Just now we should be particularly jealous of it, because it is our dearest present hope that this character and reputation may presently, in God's providence, bring us an opportunity such as has seldom

been vouchsafed any nation, to counsel and obtain peace in the world and reconciliation and healing settlement of many a matter that has cooled and interrupted the friendship of nations. This is the time above all others when we should wish and resolve to keep our strength by self-possession, our influence by preserving our ancient principles of action."

The traditional military policy of America was to rely upon its militia, its citizen soldiery; more than that would be a reversal of the whole history and character of American policy. To do more than that, Mr. Wilson asserted, would mean "that we had lost our self-possession, that we had been thrown off our balance by a war with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us, whose very existence affords us opportunities of friendship and disinterested service which should make us ashamed of any thought of hostility or fearful preparation for trouble." A powerful navy America had always had and would continue to have, "but who shall tell us what sort of navy to build?" Mr. Wilson asked, and when will the experts be right?

The policy of America, Mr. Wilson said in conclusion, "will not be for an occasion. It will be conceived as a permanent and settled thing, which we will pursue at all seasons, without haste and after a fashion perfectly consistent with the peace of the world, the abiding friendship of States, and the unhampered freedom of all with whom we have to deal. Let there

be no misconception. The country has been misinformed. We have not been negligent of national defense. We are not unmindful of the great responsibility resting upon us. We shall learn and profit by the lesson of every experience and every new circumstance; and what is needed will be adequately done."

Yet fourteen months later he was to recant, publicly and without qualification, making no attempt to soften his abjuration but honestly admitting he had been mistaken and was now anxious to make profession of his repentance. Addressing the Railway Business Association in New York, on January 27, 1916, Mr. Wilson insisted that America desired above all things peace and that he shared that profound love for peace. "I have sought to maintain peace against very great and sometimes very unfair odds. I have had many a time to use every power that was in me to prevent such a catastrophe as war coming upon this country," but the conditions required that consideration be given to defense, and he added: "Perhaps when you learned, as I dare say you did learn beforehand, that I was expecting to address you on the subject of preparedness, you recalled the address which I made to Congress something more than a year ago, in which I said that this question of military preparedness was not a pressing question. But more than a year has gone by since then, and I would be ashamed if I had not learned something in fourteen months. The minute I stop changing my

mind with the change of all the circumstances of the world, I will be a back number."

Having thus handsomely confessed his error Mr. Wilson took the public still further into his confidence and explained why he had reversed himself in another matter. The Republicans had agitated the creation of a Commission of experts to study the tariff so as to take the tariff out of politics, but Mr. Wilson had opposed this. He told his audience: "There is another thing about which I have changed my mind. A year ago I was not in favor of a tariff board, and I will tell you why." At that time, he said, the only purpose of the tariff board was to keep alive an unprofitable controversy and to disturb business, but now there was going on in the world an economic revolution: no man had the elements of that revolution clearly in his mind, and the business of legislation with regard to international trade could not be undertaken until the facts were known, which was a study properly to be made by experts. The Republicans hailed this *volte face* with cynical delight and, to use Mr. Wilson's own phrase, as "there is a great deal more opinion vocal in this world than is consistent with logic", satirically suggested they would gladly furnish their opponents with the ideas of which they were barren. Mr. Wilson was not unduly disturbed. To him consistency was less important than circumstance.

5

Mr. Wilson was going through an evolution, forced by circumstance. He was meeting his opportunity as strong men do, strong enough to keep an open mind, without pride of opinion to see events in their reality and understand their meaning. He was able now to see the war in a new aspect, that whatever it might have been at the beginning and whatever its causes were at the outset, it had ceased to be a war between nations but had now become another phase of the age-long struggle between liberty and despotism, between freedom and slavery, between progress and reaction. In an address made at the banquet of the League to Enforce Peace, in Washington on May 27, 1916, Mr. Wilson said of the war: "With its causes and its objects we are not concerned. The obscure fountains from which its stupendous flood has burst forth we are not interested to search for or explore," and it was another of those phrases that perhaps would have been as well left unsaid, or if it must be said to have been amplified. To the public it seemed callous that the President should say America was not concerned in the causes of the war, and the President was criticized for saying it, because at that time the causes of the war, that is to say, its responsibility, was discussed with fierce zeal by the partisans of the Allies and Germany. If Germany provoked the war and was the wrongdoer, surely no American could be in sympathy with Germany; but if Germany was not

the aggressor, if her opponents were equally determined on war, then neither side could expect American sympathy on the ground of resisting unwarranted attack.

To Mr. Wilson this argument was futile. It was labor wasted in flogging a dead horse. To search the past, to rake over the bones of history long crumbled to dust was idle, it might amuse children but was no occupation for grown men. What was clear to Mr. Wilson, what ought to be equally clear to his audience, as he believed, was not to spend time in seeking the original causes of the war but to understand the great cause that the war had become. That was the all-important and all-sufficient thing, because when men understood not what brought on the war but that the war was to vindicate morality and save the world, America would no longer doubt. The more one understands the way in which Mr. Wilson's mind works, the more closely he is studied, the more logical he reveals himself. With an engaging frankness that is rare in public men, Mr. Wilson constantly throws a light upon himself and takes the public into his confidence, if they have the intelligence to understand the significance of an almost parenthetical sentence. Thus in his speech at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, on September 27, 1918, he said: "I have responded gladly and with a resolution that has grown warmer and more confident as the issues have grown clearer and clearer." Amplify the thought back of the words and it would be that at one time the remote causes

of the war were obscure and they did not touch Mr. Wilson, but as that obscurity lifted and the issues stood forth terrible in what they threatened, majestic in what they offered, they appealed so irresistibly to him that he not only made them his own but became their champion.

Mr. Wilson, to return to midsummer of 1915, had not become a militant, but he was ceasing to be a pacifist, he was taking a new view of force, because in a world rent asunder by war he had the wisdom to see that the nation unarmed was in peril. He had sources of information denied the public, but what he knew could not be revealed, and his knowledge caused him constant anxiety. In his speech before the Railway Business Association he said, "I cannot tell you what the international relations of this country will be to-morrow, and I use the word literally; and I would not dare to keep silent and let the country suppose that to-morrow was certain to be as bright as to-day." More than once about this time he used similar language and showed the fear that lay heavy upon him. The policy of Germany, her utter disregard of neutral rights, her violation of international law, her manifold and revolting crimes, the contempt with which the German Government treated America and either sneered at American remonstrance or attempted to bully, caused Mr. Wilson to fear the time must come when it would be impossible to maintain neutrality. His patience was sorely taxed, yet the more he was

challenged, the greater the provocation, the more resolutely he labored to prevent war so that all Americans should "draw together for the successful prosecution of peace", a distinction, he said, "I covet for America." But he still had to meet the same difficulty that had faced him from the outset. Sentiment was undoubtedly turning against Germany; in the Atlantic deeps the *Lusitania* was a shrine to which the thoughts of Americans turned in loving pity or glowing resentment that flamed anew at the report of every fresh German atrocity; the cries of the victims of German lust clutched at America's heart; but America still remained spiritually divided, in thought two nations; the demand for war was opposed by the demand for peace; selfishness, ignorance and cowardice had not been eradicated; and millions of men and women, perverted by a strained construction of morality, soothed their consciences by no longer affecting neutrality, — even they felt the shame of pretended indifference in the presence of a world crucified, — but cloaked self-interest and prejudice in pretended patriotism, and vociferously declared themselves to be "not pro-Ally or pro-German, but pro-American."

Mr. Wilson had not succeeded in converting his countrymen, but the seeds of conversion were sown, and in the fullness of time would come to a rich harvest. Had Mr. Wilson died in 1915 or been defeated in the following year, history, blind to aspiration and recording only achievement, would have judged him

not by aspiration but by accomplishment, not by what he had hoped to do but by what he had failed to do; and history would have written the verdict, seemingly a just one, that as a statesman he utterly failed, that given an opportunity such as had been given to few men, certainly to no other American President, he was unable to grasp it because of temperamental or other deficiencies.

In those two years and until Mr. Wilson led the country to war superficial judgment would have said that pursuing the policy of timidity, endeavoring to displease no one and to retain the good will of every one, he suffered the usual fate of the man who attempts to ride two horses. Apparently he had alienated his friends and made his opponents still more embittered; men who were neither friends nor enemies but who were tolerant and disposed to give him the benefit of every doubt were puzzled and disturbed. His position was peculiar, unlike that of any modern head of a state or the leader of a great political party.

His course had given great offense. The Germanic party, meaning by that the Germans of Germany and the Germans in America as well as their avowed and secret supporters and sympathizers, were more convinced than ever that Mr. Wilson's official neutrality simply concealed his Ally sympathies; that professing friendship for all the world and perpetually talking peace, secretly he detested Germany and had friendship only for the Allies. The Germanic party

hated Mr. Wilson and constantly intrigued against him.

The Allies, both in their own countries and in America, and their adherents and champions, no less bitterly disliked him. He balanced too nicely. He paltered with Germany and he nagged England. Germany murdered and he protested; England opened the mails and he threatened. He preached humanity, but to the plea of humanity in its distress he was deaf. The world was dying, and the only consolation he could offer were the measured words of a peaceful America making cerements for a dead world.

It has often been a disputable question whether public opinion in America is formed by the relatively small intellectual class at the top which influences the great mass below, or whether the mass is the force that creates what the intellectuals formulate. That question need not be further pursued, but it is quite certain that in America from 1914 to the beginning of 1917 the intellectuals, the editors of newspapers, every man who by voice or pen was able to influence the thought of his fellow man in the interest of the Allies, saw in Mr. Wilson's course only cowardice, and to them delay was dishonesty. Intellect does not suffer gladly to be told what it knows, it is intolerant of unnecessary information and resents its infliction. Mr. Wilson's iteration and reiteration of duty, humanity, peace, liberty, altruism, service, to them these were words merely, high-sounding but empty

words, words to tickle the ears of the mass because they sounded well but had no meaning. To the intellectuals the causes of the war were no more obscure than the duty of the United States was in doubt; right and justice were so plain they needed no guide, but what they failed to take into consideration was the sluggish mind of the mass. The mass still remained in ignorance, its only interest in the war still remained that of self-interest; the moral meaning of the war was beyond them. The mass had to be patiently told and taught; told and taught so often in the same words that at last they would be made to see.

This is what Mr. Wilson was doing, slowly, it is true, but very surely. Every speech he made provoked excited discussion, and discussion, even if excited and angry and often ignorant and malicious, was education. You cannot keep on talking about morality, and have newspapers and public men ridicule morality, without the people beginning to question the meaning of morality and to ask what concern they have in international morality. Mr. Wilson, it was said, uttered nothing but pretty platitudes, he floated in the higher realms of idealism, he was vague and academic; but to stagnant thought he gave an impulse. He was doing in his own way and to meet the requirements of the American temperament what Peter the Hermit did when he preached his crusade, what men in every age and every tongue have done who placed themselves at the head of a

great movement to bring the mass against their will to see the beauty of life redeemed by sacrifice and devotion to a principle. What he said could not be drowned by ridicule or dismissed lightly or be forgotten, because subconsciously it stirred the spirit and set a chord vibrating. The American is a composite of altruism and materialism, of idealism and the practical, of balance and emotion, as responsive as the tuning fork to the note. Avid for pleasure and feverish in its pursuit, men and women were thinking; they were dissatisfied, angry, impatient, as much with themselves as with Mr. Wilson because he pricked conscience; they felt something stirring within them, they were irritated because the thing would not be quiet, but they were thinking. That much Mr. Wilson had done. He made them think.

They would perhaps have thought more vocally, and perhaps instead of thinking they would have been simply vocal, had Mr. Wilson been a man of passion who fired men with his own heat. In one of his speeches Mr. Wilson said three thousand miles of "cool and silent ocean" separated America from Europe, and to many Americans Mr. Wilson was as cool and unruffled as the measureless ocean. What men longed for was a leader who blazed, who at times flamed with the righteous wrath that ought to have consumed him, who, if for a moment only, would cast aside the armor of office and reveal himself a human being, willing to do a wrong in a righteous cause.

They wanted evidence, palpable, substantial, obvious, that the man was human and not simply an intellect, they would have rejoiced had his brain unleashed his heart and cold calculation given place to the fine and generous emotion to make him disregard consequences for the sake of right. But he was, to his fellow men, too well regulated, too much a master of himself, too well disciplined to give way to the honest passions that lend a dignity to ordinary men.

Mr. Wilson now, as had happened before and was to happen again, was misunderstood, and the qualities that ought to have won him the admiration of his countrymen were used to his disadvantage. It was not a tepid disposition and the over-refinement of calculation that held him back and made him master of himself, it was the quality of greatness that made him patient and able to resist desire and be content to wait until the moment came to strike. Mr. Wilson had been deeply moved by the crimes of Germany and felt the same indignation that every other humane and civilized person did, but he would not permit his personal feelings to sway his official actions. The gossip that clusters about a President, much of it trivial and some of it valuable as a revelation of character and often more important than posthumous judgment, Mr. Wilson, as it has been previously remarked, has escaped, but one incident, the authenticity of which is established, is interesting as showing how little the American people really understood their President.

It was a tacit agreement among the members of the President's family that while they were privileged to discuss the war among themselves they would not discuss it in his presence. Entering a room one day in which members of the family were seated, the lively conversation as the door opened was followed by an embarrassed silence. Mr. Wilson looked at the group quizzically and said: "I know what you were talking about; you were talking about the war. In five minutes I could get just as excited as all the rest of you, but that's one reason why one person at least must keep his head and remain sane."

6

Beginning in the end of 1915 and in the early months of the following year Mr. Wilson made many speeches similar to that he delivered before the Railway Business Association advocating an adequate army and navy. Mr. Wilson had not wavered in his conviction that the United States ought to remain neutral, that as a neutral she could be of greater service to mankind than as a belligerent, that, as he said in the third annual address to Congress on December 7, 1915: "It was necessary, if a universal catastrophe was to be avoided, that a limit should be set to the sweep of destructive war and that some part of the great family of nations should keep the processes of peace alive, if only to prevent collective economic ruin and the break-

down throughout the world of the industries by which its populations are fed and sustained"; but circumstance was again compelling action. Germany had to be considered in the light of a foe, determined apparently to provoke the United States, and seemingly indifferent to what the United States might do. In all his speeches Mr. Wilson never omitted to stress the altruistic mission of the United States or the things for which she was striving, but he coupled with that the necessity of the country making itself ready to resist attack. Thus at Cleveland, Ohio, on January 29, 1916, he said — and this speech is typical of the others delivered at that time: "We are peculiar in this, that from the first we have dedicated our force to the service of justice and righteousness and peace . . . do you not see that if I am to guard the honor of the nation, I am not protecting it against itself, for we are not going to do anything to stain the honor of our own country. I am protecting it against things that I cannot control, the action of others. And where the action of others may bring us I cannot foretell. You may count upon my heart and resolution to keep you out of the war, but you must be ready if it is necessary that I should maintain your honor." In a word, Mr. Wilson was turning the thought of the country to realize that it might be forced to go to war. He was destroying the fatuousness which made so many Americans believe that come what might the United States was in no danger

and by some mysterious providence could be spared the experience of every other nation; that it was too formidable to be attacked and too powerful to need defense. War, he made men see, must now be regarded not as a distant possibility but as something that an untoward event might any day bring very near; but if war came it would be a war not for conquest or aggression or to satisfy an unworthy ambition, but in defense of honor and those ideals which America had always sustained.

Still another motive moved Mr. Wilson. He had a Congress that was pacifist, that was cowed by the political strength of the Germanic party, too indifferent to national interests to dare the antagonism of the electorate hostile to Mr. Wilson and the formidable peace-at-any-price voters. It is true there were many courageous and far-seeing men in Congress who, irrespective of party or personal feelings, were ready loyally to support the President and carry through his recommendations, but it is also true, — and numerous votes proved it, — that in both parties were men either openly or covertly opposing legislation directed against Germany. Mr. Wilson knew that to reach these members of Congress he must first quicken the country, and one of his purposes in appealing to the people was to start a back fire. In every speech he told his audience, varying his words but not the substance, that he knew of the necessities of the case but they must "stand back of the executive authorities of

the United States in urging upon those who make our laws as early and effective action as possible."

The year before had seen a vacancy created in the Cabinet by the enforced resignation of Mr. Bryan; this year was to see another break when Mr. Garrison, on February 10, surrendered his portfolio as Secretary of War, owing to an irreconcilable conflict of opinion with the President regarding the method to increase the army. Mr. Garrison's force and character and his advocacy of a complete reorganization of the military establishment had favorably impressed the "big army" men as the first step toward the United States declaring war on Germany, but they saw in his resignation confirmation of their fears that the President had no intention of making war.

CHAPTER X

America in the War

1

Mr. Wilson's renomination for the Presidency in 1916 was a foregone conclusion, but his election was uncertain, and the possibility of defeat weighed heavily upon him. It was with no feeling of wounded personal ambition Mr. Wilson contemplated defeat, but he feared his half-finished work would be left uncompleted, and he foresaw the difficulties that would follow the election of a Republican President and the dangerous political situation that would be brought about.

The Democratic majority in Congress was opposed to war. There were Democrats in both Houses who were openly for war, to whom Mr. Wilson's policy of restraint and caution was distasteful, who were no less impatient than the Republicans at Mr. Wilson's inaction and who in private were as critical as their opponents; but the party, as a whole, was satisfied with the policy of neutrality and determined vigorously to resist a declaration of war against Germany; on more than one occasion some of its members had attempted to secure the enactment of legislation in

the interest of Germany and seriously detrimental to the Allies. It was only by the exercise of all his power as the party leader and the President that Mr. Wilson was able to defeat this attempted legislation, but his majority was always uncomfortably close.

The Republicans had been bitterly critical of Mr. Wilson's Mexican policy, and while not explicitly demanding war against Mexico, they had judged Mr. Wilson guilty of incompetence and shamefully weak in his submission to Mexico; and to them Mexico seemed to offer an issue to appeal to the country. They were now in the same position as their antagonists, they were not united for or against war; Republicans had voted with Democrats to secure the passage of the legislation which Mr. Wilson must at any cost prevent, but, speaking broadly, the Republicans were the war party, and it was a declaration of war they wanted against Germany, for in 1916 the leaders of the Republican party were strongly pro-Ally. It would require too long and detailed an examination of American political and social conditions to explain this, and it would not in any way throw light on the character and work of Mr. Wilson; but the result was the war had become a question of internal politics. Having made the war a political issue, the Republicans, if they came into power, would be committed to war against Germany, and the Democrats, opposed to war and smarting under defeat, looking upon the Republican championship

of war as merely a crafty political trick to win the election, would have offered a practically solid front against the dominant party's war measures. Perhaps the Democrats, in opposition, would not have gone to the extreme lengths of preventing war, and war, as we know now but, with the possible exception of Mr. Wilson, nobody knew then, was bound to come; but it was obvious to every one, to Mr. Wilson it was clearer than to any one else, that the great principle at stake and the material interests of the United States would be in jeopardy were the Democratic party to be defeated at the forthcoming election. And it must be remembered Mr. Wilson had not abandoned hope that war could be averted. It was a slender hope, for after the sinking of the *Sussex* in April, 1916, the breaking point had been almost reached, but Germany had once more given pledges, and without being unduly optimistic, Mr. Wilson might believe Germany would see the folly of dragging the United States to war.

In 1912 the campaign was fought on domestic issues, and the American people went to the polls to vote for the candidate who promised the social reforms they demanded, no thought of foreign affairs being in their minds. In 1916 the foreign policy of the Administration, Mexico and the war, was, in effect, the only issue before the American people. The war had brought such confusion to America that the well-established bases of political calculations were worth-

less. The Germans longed for the defeat of Mr. Wilson, yet they felt by no means certain that the election of Mr. Hughes would not throw America into the war, and, much as they hated Mr. Wilson, they were shrewd enough to see that they would gain nothing by his defeat if with the incoming of the Republicans the United States ceased to be neutral. The general knowledge of the attitude of the Germans and the hope of the German Government that the Democrats would lose the election, brought to Mr. Wilson's support Americans whose patriotism was stronger than their partisanship; who resented a foreign element under the dictation of a foreign government attempting to punish the President for defending American rights. But the deciding factor unquestionably was the strong sentiment, irrespective of party, in favor of peace, which was crystallized into the campaign cry — perhaps the most effective any candidate ever had, and all the more effective because it was spontaneous and not manufactured — "He kept us out of war."

Twice Mr. Wilson had been tempted, and twice he had resisted. Mexico and military glory were dangled before his eyes and he turned his back upon them. To win the fame that is the possession of every war President was his if he cared to take it, and he would not. The man that twice had given these hostages to his peaceful desires was safer at the head of affairs at a time so critical than an unknown man, the candi-

date of a party whose leaders were shouting for war. Exalted unselfishness and the most despicable selfishness were again leagued in a common cause. Good men and women, to whom the very thought of war was dreadful, voted for Mr. Wilson because he had kept the country out of war, and to them nothing was more horrible than the slaughter of war. Western farmers voted for Mr. Wilson because he had kept the country out of war, and by keeping the country out of war Mr. Wilson had indirectly been the means of adding enormously to the price of every bushel of wheat, every horse, every bullock their farms produced.

Mr. Wilson was elected by a popular plurality of 581,000 votes and a majority of twenty-three votes in the electoral college, but these figures while statistically correct are deceptive. The election, in fact, was extremely close, and the balance between the two parties almost microscopic. The total vote cast was 18,529,406. Mr. Wilson's plurality was only a trifle more than three *per cent*, but even this meager margin does not tell how narrowly Mr. Wilson missed defeat. The whole number of votes in the electoral college was 531, 266 votes were necessary to a choice, Mr. Wilson receiving 277 and Mr. Hughes 254. California has thirteen votes in the electoral college, and Mr. Wilson carried California by the slender margin of 3773 votes in a total vote of 999,968; a fractional change in the vote would have given Mr. Hughes the

Presidency by a majority of one electoral vote. Several other states were almost as close. Without the eighteen votes of Missouri in the electoral college Mr. Wilson was defeated, yet he had an excess of less than four *per cent* of the aggregate vote. Without the ten votes of Kansas Mr. Wilson could not have been elected, but his majority was a fraction less than six *per cent* of the whole. Even more remarkable was the Minnesota vote, where in a total of 387,378 votes Mr. Hughes carried the State by only 396 votes. These figures justified the partisans of both candidates before election in counting upon victory and prove both candidates were warranted in fearing defeat.

2

The five months that passed between his nomination in June and his election in November were perhaps the most trying time of Mr. Wilson's public life. Mr. Wilson was President, would remain President until the following March, but it is a weakness of the American political system that if the President is the party's candidate for reelection he is shackled between nomination and election, and ceases almost to have any influence after election if he is defeated. Mr. Wilson was in somewhat the same position that Lincoln was in the summer of 1864, who believed he was to be defeated at the coming November election, who knew that the election of McClellan meant the ending of the war not by victory of the North and

the extirpation of slavery and the vindication of the principle of political unity, but by a compromise which would settle nothing and leave conditions ripe for another conflict. "Seldom in history was so much staked upon a popular vote. I suppose never in history," Emerson wrote after the election; and now as we look back we can see how much was staked on that vote of the American people in November, 1916.

Earlier in the year, on April 18, Mr. Wilson sent to the German Government a note on the sinking of the cross-Channel French steamer *Sussex*, which he declared was "one of the most terrible examples of the inhumanity of submarine warfare as the commanders of German vessels are conducting it"; and he notified Germany that "unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Government altogether." On the following day the President went before Congress and repeated in substance, in some passages textually, his note to Germany.

Germany gave assurances that she would change her methods of submarine warfare and would not attack unarmed merchant vessels without warning, and between May, 1916, and the end of January, 1917, she made some pretense of observing her obli-

gation; not with strict honesty, because the German cannot be honest, but with seeming desire to respect her pledge; which convinced Americans Germany had yielded to Mr. Wilson and was anxious not to add the United States to her foes. But as the summer waned Mr. Wilson knew to the contrary; he knew that Germany had again lied to gain time, that submarines were being built to the full extent of German facilities, and the only reason Germany appeared to be submissive was that she was not then ready to defy the United States. When that time came, when she felt herself strong enough to defy the United States as she had defied the rest of the world, the campaign of murder would be resumed, American vessels would be destroyed and American lives taken, and then, slightly to paraphrase Mr. Wilson's words used in another connection, "not gently, with ceremonious introduction, but suddenly and at once", America would be brought squarely to face the issue.

In his address formally accepting his nomination, on September 2, Mr. Wilson showed what was in his mind but, as he likes to do, by periphrase rather than direct statement. "In foreign affairs," he said, "we have been guided by principles clearly conceived and consistently lived up to. Perhaps they have not been fully comprehended because they have hitherto governed international affairs only in theory, not in practice. They are simple, obvious, easily stated, and fundamental to American ideals.

"We have been neutral not only because it was the fixed and traditional policy of the United States to stand aloof from the politics of Europe and because we had had no part either of action or of policy in the influences which brought on the present war, but also because it was manifestly our duty to prevent, if it were possible, the indefinite extension of the fires of hate and desolation kindled by that terrible conflict and seek to serve mankind by reserving our strength and our resources for the anxious and difficult day of restoration and healing which must follow, when peace will have to build its house anew.

"The rights of our own citizens of course became involved: that was inevitable. Where they did this was our guiding principle: that property rights can be vindicated by claims for damages when the war is over, and no modern nation can decline to arbitrate such claims; but the fundamental rights of humanity cannot be. The loss of life is irreparable. Neither can a direct violation of a nation's sovereignty await vindication in suits for damages. The nation that violates these essential rights must expect to be checked and called to account by direct challenge and resistance. It at once makes the quarrel in part our own. These are plain principles and we have never lost sight of them or departed from them, whatever the stress or perplexity of circumstance or the provocation to hasty resentment. The record is clear and consistent throughout and stands distinct and definite

for every one to judge who wishes to know the truth about it."

This was warning to Germany that if she challenged the challenge would be met. To the country it was notice that if Germany resumed her campaign of murder on the high seas American neutrality would cease. Mr. Wilson took notice of German intrigues in America and flung down the gauntlet. "I am the candidate of a party," he said, "but I am above all things else an American citizen. I neither seek the favor nor fear the displeasure of that small alien element amongst us which puts loyalty to any foreign power before loyalty to the United States."

Referring to Mexico, because he was defending his Mexican as well as his European policy, Mr. Wilson said: "So long as the power of recognition rests with me the Government of the United States will refuse to extend the hand of welcome to any one who obtains power in a sister republic by treachery and violence. I declared that to be the policy of the Administration within three weeks after I assumed the Presidency. I here again vow it. I am more interested in the fortunes of oppressed men and pitiful women and children than in any property rights whatever. Mistakes I have no doubt made in this perplexing business, but not in purpose or object."

In concluding he said he looked forward to the day when "America shall strive to stir the world without irritating it or drawing it on to new antagonisms, when

the nations with which we deal shall at last come to see upon what deep foundations of humanity and justice our passion for peace rests, and when all mankind shall look upon our great people with a new sentiment of admiration, friendly rivalry and real affection, as upon a people who, though keen to succeed, seeks always to be at once generous and just and to whom humanity is dearer than profit or selfish power."

Throughout the summer Mr. Wilson continued to make speeches, on every occasion stressing the desire of the country for peace but equally stressing moral duty. Before the New York Press Club, on June 30, he said he was constantly in receipt of letters from unknown men and humble women and the one prayer in all these letters was: "Mr. President, do not allow anybody to persuade you that the people of this country want war with anybody," and he added: "I am for the time being the spokesman of such people, gentlemen. I have not read history without observing that the greatest forces in the world and the only permanent forces are the moral forces. . . .

"I am willing, no matter what my personal fortunes may be, to play for the verdict of mankind. Personally, it will be a matter of indifference to me what the verdict on the seventh of November is, provided I feel any degree of confidence that when a later jury sits I shall get their judgment in my favor. Not in my favor personally — what difference does that

make? — but in my favor as an honest and conscientious spokesman of a great nation."

Addressing a Citizenship Convention in Washington, July 13, the President said: "America was intended to be a spirit among the nations of the world, and it is the purpose of conferences like this to find out the best way to introduce the newcomers to this spirit, and by that very interest in them to enhance and purify in ourselves the thing that ought to make America great and not only ought to make her great, but ought to make her exhibit a spirit unlike any other nation in the world. . . . No man has ever risen to the real stature of spiritual manhood until he has found that it is finer to serve somebody else than it is to serve himself. . . . This process of Americanization is going to be a process of purification, a process of rededication to the things which America represents and is proud to represent. And it takes a great deal more courage and steadfastness, my fellow citizens, to represent ideal things than to represent anything else."

On the fourth of September Mr. Wilson accepted on behalf of the nation the Lincoln Memorial, built on the site of the log cabin in which Lincoln was born. Although Mr. Wilson commands the world as his audience he is not a great stylist, he has none of that marvelous use of the simplest words that gave distinction to everything that Lincoln wrote and made his Gettysburg Address immortal and his Second Inaugural a classic; his short letters, of which he has

written many, are banal, commonplace even, contrasted with the sentiment and diction of Lincoln's living letter to Mrs. Bixby, for instance; but Mr. Wilson's strength is his sincerity, his profound belief in the things he says, the expression of his idealism, which, like his religion, is not a garment but the very fiber of his being. He is the voice of mankind crying in the wilderness. He speaks for the silent mass, silent but thinking, who cannot speak for itself. He says what men believe. He has made idealism real. In all that Mr. Wilson has written the Lincoln Address, as literature, will undoubtedly rank first. It has a quality found in nothing else from his pen; it has style, sentiment, imagination; it is as if the spirit of Lincoln had touched his disciple and guided him. "This is a place alike of mystery and reassurance", is a sentence from the Address. The mystery remains.

The Address should be read, not alone for the pleasure it will give to every lover of noble thoughts made beautiful by beautifully phrased English, but because we may accept one portion of it as an intimate self-revelation. I have said in a previous chapter that Mr. Wilson has been a close student of Lincoln's methods, and it is interesting to hear from Mr. Wilson himself: "I have read many biographies of Lincoln; I have sought out with the greatest interest the many intimate stories that are told of him, the narratives of near-by friends, the sketches at close quarters, in

which those who had the privilege of being associated with him have tried to depict for us the very man himself 'in his habit as he lived'; but I have nowhere found a real intimate of Lincoln's." The impression he received, Mr. Wilson said, was that no one "had in fact penetrated to the heart of his mystery, or that any man could penetrate to the heart of it. That brooding spirit had no real familiars. I get the impression that it never spoke out in complete self-revelation, and that it could not reveal itself completely to any one." Mr. Wilson is no brooding spirit, but do not those few lines deeply etched give us the portrait of the artist? Lincoln revealed himself through what he said and wrote and did; so has Mr. Wilson, and yet one feels about Mr. Wilson as he felt about Lincoln: he comprehended men without fully communing with them; that in spite of all his genial efforts at comradeship his spirit dwelt apart, saw its visions of duty where no man looked on. "There is a very holy and very terrible isolation," the President said, "for the conscience of every man who seeks to read the destiny in affairs for others as well as for himself, for a nation as well as for individuals. That privacy no man can intrude upon. That lonely search of the spirit for the right perhaps no man can assist. This strange child of the cabin kept company with invisible things, was born into no intimacy but that of its own silently assembling and deploying thoughts."

3

Reëlected, Mr. Wilson now felt himself free to act. The country was not yet ready for war, but it was fast reaching that point when it needed only to be told war was unavoidable to accept the decision. "The whole art and practice of government consists, not in moving individuals, but in moving masses," Mr. Wilson said in one of his speeches during the summer. The mass was now moving. Mr. Gerard, the American ambassador to Berlin, who had kept his head under the most trying circumstances and with marked intelligence forecast the future, had fully informed Mr. Wilson what to expect. The moving mass was soon to act.

On December 12 Germany proposed a discussion of peace, which the Allies rejected. On December 18 the President sent a note to all the belligerents suggesting that they state their views "as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory as a guaranty against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them." The suggestion was received with respect, but it led to no practical results.

Mr. Wilson was now to make the last effort to bring about peace and keep his own country at peace, because he knew Germany was bending every effort to renew her unrestricted submarine warfare and the time could be measured when Germany would feel

her weapon was strong enough to make her indifferent to the remonstrance of the United States. On January 22, 1917, Mr. Wilson addressed the Senate on what should be the essential terms of peace. His chief proposition was the necessity of the formation of a league of nations to guarantee peace and justice throughout the world, to which the United States must adhere. It was in this address Mr. Wilson used the phrase "it must be a peace without victory." "Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand."

To the Allies this was not pleasant reading. For more than two years and a half they had been fighting against overwhelming odds, they had fought not an honorable foe who redeemed the ghastly business of war by his chivalry, but an enemy whose savagery disgraced the savage, whose unspeakable crimes made civilization tremble, who had committed infamies that only a nation perverted and degenerate could conceive or execute. Yet the high courage of the Allies had not wavered. They were sustained by the strength of the spirit. In the beginning, with bare hands, they had beaten back the advancing hordes, savages, but armed with all the devices of science corrupted to torture and kill. Through long and

weary months they had fought and died, but their resolve could not be killed. They were prepared to die, to give their lives if need be to the cause which made the humblest in their ranks a hero, but they would not surrender or cravenly accept a compromise peace that would leave Germany the victor and encourage her again to plunge the world in despair.

But this, Allied opinion believed, Mr. Wilson proposed. A peace without victory, a peace that should enable Germany to escape her just punishment, that should leave her unscathed while she had left Belgium in ruins, and to France, fighting only in self-defense, brought desolation, could not be entertained. It would be contrary not only to every tradition of the Anglo-Saxon race and blood but it would have been an admission of defeat, a confession of cowardice, the recognition that the world acknowledged only force, that morality no longer existed and only might prevailed.

Mr. Wilson's appeal was moving, he urged it with all his force and eloquence and sincerity, but it did not touch the hearts of the Allied peoples, suffering, weary, weighted under their heavy load of sorrow, but grim and determined, their iron wills unbroken. "Perhaps," Mr. Wilson said to the Senate, "I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back. I am speaking as an individual, and yet I am speaking also, of course, as the responsible head of a great

government, and I feel confident that I have said what the people of the United States would wish me to say. May I not add that I hope and believe that I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every program of liberty? I would fain believe that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have as yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin they see to have come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear."

More than one consideration makes this perhaps the most important of all of Mr. Wilson's pre-war addresses. In broad terms he proposed to all the belligerents "peace without victory", which would apply equally to the Entente as to Germany and her allies, but, in fact, it was the last opportunity to Germany to escape being crushed. If the United States came into the war, — and no statesman whose sources of information were as complete as Mr. Wilson's could doubt how events were being shaped, — never again would Germany be offered peace without victory. Once the United States drew the sword she would not sheathe it until her sword had been the means of winning peace with victory. Mr. Wilson's profound knowledge of the psychology of his own people was not needed to establish this. The American people would not go to war, but they could be forced into war; engaged in war they would go through with

it; they would fight for victory and exact the victor's terms. Half measures would satisfy no one; the magnitude of the war, the sacrifices that the war would demand, the dramatic seizure of the imagination — for the first time in history an American army fighting on the soil of Europe against a European nation; the moral no less than the material support that America was to give to England and France; the reaction on the American by the companionship of arms with Englishmen and Frenchmen; the sympathy which would fill the American when he knew what Englishmen and Frenchmen had suffered in those years when he lived in security and comfort and coined their misery into profit; regret and a chivalrous desire to atone by works; the feeling of hate he would have for Germany when he saw what Germany had done and the anguish she had caused, — Mr. Wilson would have been devoid of imagination and his vision blinded had he not known that with the landing of the first American soldier in France the hearts of the American people would be steeled to peace with victory, and their resolution would be unshakable to make Germany know the meaning of the victor's terms.

The Address of January 22 has caused more discussion than anything Mr. Wilson has said or done. On its face it is so inconsistent with all that Mr. Wilson said before that day or was to say or do so soon after that day that it is irreconcilable with precept or performance. Yet not by a shade does it

vary from the consistent policy Mr. Wilson pursued from the outset, nor does it depart by a hair's breadth from the morality he had so constantly preached and was so anxious to have accepted; he was as logical then as he had been from the first day of the war.

Mr. Wilson has been accused of inconsistency, of being wool when he ought to be iron; the policy of opportunism, in short, which was precisely the same accusation brought against Lincoln. In 1862 Lincoln caused a tremendous storm by writing to Horace Greeley: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." Lincoln's opponents could feel they were in honesty warranted in saying that he was wavering; that he was willing to free the slaves or compromise with slavery; that he was uncertain when he ought to have been resolute. But in that same letter he also said: "What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views."

Mr. Wilson could very well have spoken in the

language of Lincoln; like Lincoln he could have said he would correct errors when shown to be errors; he would adopt new views when they were shown to be correct views; like Lincoln he could have said he would do less or more according as he believed it would hurt or help the moral cause so dear and near to his heart.

The foundation of Mr. Wilson's policy is morality. That has been said before, it has been emphasized, and it cannot be overemphasized if the man is to be understood, for the policy is the man. His critics call it idealism. His opponents say it is the unpractical, dogmatic man forced by accident into a place for which he is unfitted. One may call it idealism, one may describe Mr. Wilson as the unpractical man, but the fact remains that his policy from the first day he entered the White House has been dictated by morality. It was morality that governed his Mexican policy; it was morality that would not permit him to countenance American bankers taking their pound of flesh from China, it was morality that made him ask for the repeal of the Panama Canal tolls exemption, it was morality that made him see the unfairness of the anti-Japanese legislation, it was morality that imposed upon him neutrality and self-restraint and patience. It was morality, again, that dictated the Address of January 22.

The war had gone on for thirty months. It had accomplished nothing, except to drown the world in

blood; it had brought nothing, only devastation, destruction, desolation. Germany had not won, but could the Allies win? Mr. Wilson is not a military man, — it is one of the elements of his strength that he knows his own limitations and does not pretend to knowledge he does not possess, — but taking counsel from the men whose opinion was valuable, it is not surprising that at times he should have believed the Allied task was hopeless. There were men about Mr. Wilson, able men and unprejudiced, who knew the elements and could give them their proper value, who doubted whether Germany could be decisively defeated, who felt sure she could not be starved or broken financially. The war might continue another thirty months, another thirty months of horror and death, to end in a peace by the compromise of exhaustion or a victor's peace that would leave Europe a charnel house and her peoples mad in their despair.

Was it worth it? Was there not something better worth while? Did it not offer promise of richer reward for the future security and happiness of the world? The old morality like the old diplomacy, wars for greed, to satisfy dynastic ambition, to crush weaker nations; secret treaties, the intrigues of dishonest or ambitious statesmen, the jealousies and rivalries of parties trading on the fear of foreign attack; these things were to Mr. Wilson abhorrent, immoral, unrighteous. These things a European statesman brought up in the traditions of European statecraft

would perhaps have said had always been, must always be; they were inevitable. To Mr. Wilson, viewing not only history but life from the detachment of America, his traditions being not the statecraft of Europe but the democracy of America, believing in democracy and the consent of the governed, that these things had been was no reason that they should continue; they were not inevitable. In an age priding itself on its morality the relations between nations should be governed by the same code of morality as between individuals.

We see now why Mr. Wilson addressed the Senate on the twenty-second of January. The rule of law and morality could not be put into operation unless it had the sanction of the United States, more than that, unless the United States was prepared physically to make it operative. It was the bold thing that Mr. Wilson proposed, the idealistic thing, but also the moral thing. He was proposing nothing less than the abandonment by the United States of her traditional policy, that she should emerge from her isolation and become a partner in a European league, not, as he said, to create a new balance of power, for with the balance of power he had no concern, but a community of power; not to help to create new organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.

The address has further importance because it was Mr. Wilson's last effort to save the world from the terrors that were on it, and because it proves that up to

the last moment, up to the time when Germany made war upon the United States, Mr. Wilson was still ardently desirous of peace and trying to find a means of accommodation between Germany and her enemies. It will be of interest to the historian and the future biographer of Mr. Wilson. His fame, it has before been remarked, would be different to what it now is had he died in 1915 or been defeated in 1916; he would occupy a different place in history if the Address to the Senate of January 22, 1917, had been his last official utterance on the war; for the historian, ignorant of Mr. Wilson's motives, would believe that he was so anxious for peace he was willing to subscribe to a peace that rewarded the oppressor, the violator of treaties and the mocker of law and morality. In his address to the Railroad Business Association, on January 27, 1916, using colloquial speech, Mr. Wilson said, "The minute I stop changing my mind with the change of all the circumstances of the world, I will be a back number." It is Mr. Wilson's strength that he has not been ashamed to change his mind as conditions made change necessary, and it is because he is able to change with changing circumstance that he has not become a back number but has remained in the front rank of the statesmen of the world, frequently in advance of them and to lead them; to inspire the thought of all nations; not to beckon peoples but boldly to go forward, confident they will follow. On January 22 he was the spokesman of peace, a few

months later he was to be the spokesman of war, as little desirous of war then as he had always been, but forced by the stimulus of circumstance to be for war as in the past he had labored to mold circumstance to avert war.

4

On January 31 Germany announced the long-expected renewal of the submarine war by virtually closing the seas to all neutral vessels. On receipt of what was in effect an ultimatum to the United States Mr. Wilson immediately severed diplomatic relations with Germany. On the third of February he addressed Congress, informing that body of the action he had taken and adding that he did not believe Germany would enforce her threat to sink American ships in the war zone, but if his hope proved unfounded he would ask Congress for the necessary authority to take measures of protection.

On February 26 Mr. Wilson again addressed Congress. He asked for authority to declare a state of armed neutrality existing against Germany, to arm merchant ships, and to employ any other instrumentalities or methods necessary to protect American lives and ships; and the grant of a sufficient credit to provide adequate means of protection. "I hope," the President said, "that I need give no further proofs and assurances than I have already given throughout nearly three years of anxious patience that I am the

friend of peace and mean to preserve it for America so long as I am able. I am not now proposing or contemplating war or any steps that need lead to it. . . . I believe that the people will be willing to trust me to act with restraint, with prudence, and the true spirit of amity and good faith that they have themselves displayed throughout these trying months."

Mr. Wilson said that doubtless under his constitutional duties and powers he had the authority for which he asked, "but I prefer, in the present circumstances, not to act upon general implication. I wish to feel that the authority and the power of the Congress are behind me in whatever it may become necessary for me to do." His purpose was plain. Congress must by positive action show whether it would defend the interests of the United States or shield Germany.

The term of the Congress would expire by constitutional limitation on the following fourth of March, so that little time was left for discussion if the authority the President asked for was to be granted by the existing Congress. A bill conferring the necessary power was quickly passed by the House by a vote of 403 to 14, but in the Senate action was defeated by the opposition of eleven men, who, under the rules of the Senate permitting unlimited debate, were able to prevent a vote being reached before final adjournment. Although the protectors of Germany had, for the moment, defeated the President, Mr. Wilson

had also been given unmistakable proof of the temper of the country as represented by Congress. In the House the majority was overwhelming, in the Senate the majority would have been equally impressive had a vote been taken. Mr. Wilson now had nothing more to fear. The time of doubt and suspense was over. Discussion had ceased. The time for action had come.

On the fifth of March Mr. Wilson delivered his second inaugural. War was in the thought of every man, it was seen to be inevitable, and Mr. Wilson expressed what every man was thinking. Warning his audience that the United States might be drawn into the war, he said: "We desire neither conquest nor advantage. We wish nothing that can be had only at the cost of another people. We have always professed unselfish purpose and we covet the opportunity to prove that our professions are sincere." He urged unity — "an America united in feeling, in purpose, and in its vision of duty, of opportunity, and of service. . . . United alike in the conception of our duty and in the high resolve to perform it in the face of all men, let us dedicate ourselves to the great task to which we must now set our hand. For myself I beg your tolerance, your countenance, and your united aid."

Mr. Wilson had issued his proclamation convening Congress in extra session, and on the evening of its first day, on April second, he asked for a declaration of war against Germany, saying: "There is one choice

we cannot make, we are incapable of making; we will not choose the path of submission and suffer the most sacred rights of our nation and our people to be ignored or violated. The wrongs against which we now array ourselves are no common wrongs: they cut to the very roots of human life." In asking this, however, Mr. Wilson emphasized the necessity of making very clear to all the world the motives and objects of America. They were to vindicate the principles of peace and justice as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as would henceforth insure the observance of those principles. "It is a fearful thing," he said in conclusion, "to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged

to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

The last word had been spoken. America was at war. Mr. Wilson had ceased to be the protagonist of peace and had become the War President.

CHAPTER XI

The War President

1

Mr. Wilson had not preached in vain. The day of conversion had come. His position before the country was stronger because of the long and patient efforts he had made to save peace. The people who voted for him because he kept the country out of war, who were willing to do anything to avert war, now that Mr. Wilson asked for war could not refuse. The impulse was too strong. They were convinced that no other course was possible, and it was their duty to be as loyal and zealous in their support of the War President as before they had sustained him endeavoring to keep peace.

They had argued about morality, they had scoffed at morality, the war was none of their business, but really it had always been their business and deep in their hearts they felt it, but it was not until Mr. Wilson made plain what their hearts felt that they knew.

This transformation did not come overnight. The mental attitude of a people is not to be changed

between sundown and daybreak; even cataclysmic causes do not produce such a sudden reversal. For three years the American people had talked peace and been encouraged to believe come what might they must remain at peace; the seduction of peace was not easily to be resisted. At the beginning they were bewildered, somewhat dazed by what they had done; not quite comprehending all that it meant, the scope of war not apparent; the war was still far away from them and touching neither their lives nor their happiness. The country was committed to war, but discussion had not entirely ceased. The fifty votes cast against the war resolution in the House of Representatives, whose members are supposed to be very close to the people and correctly to interpret their feelings, might be accepted as proof that a strong sentiment existed against war and the unity for which the President had appealed was to be denied him; that the thing most to be feared was to be realized, and he was to lead a divided nation to war. Yet the negative vote in the House was an appearance greater than the reality. It was the last effort of Germany intrenched in America, soon to be driven out and utterly routed. At heart America was sound. No people ever went to war with more unselfish motives or with less to gain; it was in the spirit of the crusader America went to war: to succor humanity and relieve the oppressed. Even Americans themselves did not at first realize the spirit that moved them, it was a

spirit so fine, so wonderful, so far removed from the sordid things of the market place and the practical things of life, it was the spirit of the mystic rather than the materialist, that Americans failed to understand this new meaning of life. But the meaning was soon to come to them, and with understanding was the resolve to carry the arms of America for the freedom of the world. For this concept of duty, this dedication to service and sacrifice, the moral teachings and preachments of Mr. Wilson, before the war and after America entered the war, were the moving cause.

He had taught, and was to continue to teach, not alone his own people but the whole world the meaning of democracy. Even to Americans and to the more advanced nations of Europe, England and France especially, democracy was a somewhat intangible thing. To Mr. Wilson it was very real. It was accepted as a matter of course by Americans, who, having known nothing else, politically and socially, took it as much a matter of course as the air they breathed; it was theirs by right inherent.

Mr. Wilson gave them a shibboleth, and in giving it to them he gave them something more than a phrase; and a coiner of a phrase has the ear of the world. He gave them something to cling to. "To make the world safe for democracy" was splendid, but powerless to move mountains unless there was faith. Again it was one of those idealistic conceptions without meaning to the practical, that was scoffed at and made sport

of because it was a magnificent generality that led nowhere. While Germany was ravaging Europe and all the world was taught that only force could save civilization, Mr. Wilson would redeem the world with a principle of political philosophy. In a world distraught by war and fearful of its horrors, Mr. Wilson's remote philosophical detachment was to the average man exasperating; it was a mistaken attempt to substitute academic and dispassionate discussion for strength; moreover, it seemed as foolish and contemptible as if a man seeing his neighbor's house on fire were to retire to his study and by the light of the burning building, undisturbed by the cries for help, calmly write a treatise on how to make houses safe from fire.

Mr. Wilson made democracy have a vital meaning to the peoples of the world. The purpose the civilized nations were striving for, he continually emphasized, was to make the world safe for democracy; democracy thus ceased to be a theoretic principle, even a polity, and became a principle of life and a moral code. To the far corners of the earth he brought democracy, and he made men question and ask what was this thing big enough and spiritual enough that a nation, unthreatened by invasion and safe from attack, voluntarily should draw the sword to sustain it. Imagination was powerfully seized. Peoples with ideas and thoughts deep rooted in the soil of autocracy and a paternal feudalism, to whom democracy as a

philosophy or a polity had no meaning, who were intellectually incapable of grasping the concept of a state of society in which social and political equality existed, to whom democracy was as meaningless as an untranslatable word in a foreign tongue, were, nevertheless, stirred and moved by the great spiritual force Mr. Wilson unloosed. The America that was had ceased to be, and in her place was a new America; an America that had cast off the old ideas and stood before the world the champion of a new morality, inviting all the world to join with her to secure the morality of the world.

Mr. Wilson gave to men a new hope and to mankind a fresh impulse. In the twentieth century he made America the same example and inspiration she had been in the eighteenth when men with faith, but still fearful, waited the result of their audacious experiment. To his countrymen he gave not only a shibboleth but, what was of far greater importance, a cause. They scoffed at first, but mockery gave way to questioning, and with questioning came comprehension. To make the world safe for democracy was no longer idealism but an aspiration as sublime as it was practical; it would rid the world of the terrors that beset it, and if was to justify the nation in taking up arms. Democracy heard the call and responded, and oppressed peoples everywhere prayed for the success of its arms so that they might be liberated by democracy.

Often Mr. Wilson has been accused of excessive

deliberation, but he has repeatedly given proof of the power of immediate decision when action is imperative. Again he was to show his understanding of the American temperament and to confirm that he possessed his leadership by right of intellect and force of character. The question that called for instant decision was whether the armies to be raised by the United States were to be composed of volunteers or conscription was to be enforced. Conscription, compulsory military service, is foreign to American ideas; obligatory military duty is as obnoxious to the American as to the Englishman, it is an infringement on personal liberty and that freedom of action so dear to democratic peoples whose boast is their right to dispose of themselves as they please. The men who had voted against war, who were serving Germany while sitting in the American Congress, saw in the question a further opportunity to prevent the United States from exerting its full strength. Volunteers in large numbers could of course be obtained, of that there was no doubt; patriotism, the adventurous spirit of youth, detestation of Germany, would send men to the colors; but the war would be carried on by classes and not by the whole nation, and it was essential that the nation should be enlisted and spiritually mobilized so that the war, a thing then remote, physically three thousand miles from the hearthstone of America, should be brought home to every fireside, and men and women, rich and poor, learned and unlettered, should touch

elbows and in the companionship of their hearts be one.

In his Address to Congress asking for a declaration of war Mr. Wilson recommended that the men needed for the increase of the armed forces of the United States should be "chosen upon the principle of universal liability to service", and as soon as opposition to conscription developed in Congress all his authority was exerted to secure the passage of the necessary legislation. He was staking much upon his judgment. Defeat of the measure would have been notice to Germany that the forces she controlled in America were more powerful than the President, and that America, while dragged into war against its will by the President, at heart was opposed to the war and would be only lukewarm in its prosecution. The men of cool habit, and there are always such in high places in a time of crisis, were fearful that the country would resist the enforced taking of its young men for the army, and they recalled with the joy of disaster that the timid always enjoy, the draft riots of the Civil War. These dire forebodings only fortified the confidence Mr. Wilson had in the correctness of his judgment and the necessity and justice of the measure he advocated. Not without opposition Congress sanctioned conscription, and the country, instead of resisting it, agreed with the President that it was the only equitable and democratic way to create the armies of democracy.

2

The events of the three years when the United States was a neutral have a certain perspective, exasperatingly flat, it is true, to the historical student who longs to know facts which will be the privilege of coming generations, but a perspective with depth and strength compared with the events of the past year, too near, too close at hand, to be judged with veracity. Yet there is background enough to throw into relief Mr. Wilson's work, in part, as the War Executive. He has played a dual rôle. He has been the American Prime Minister and the Chief of the American War Cabinet, and he has also been the moral leader of the Allied world.

When America declared war Mr. Wilson resolved on three things as the principles to govern him. Historically America declared war on Germany, actually it was Germany that forced America to go to war; but now that America was at war Mr. Wilson was determined that all the strength, all the resources, all the power and energy and intelligence that America controlled should be thrown into the conflict to bring about the defeat of Germany. Mr. Wilson had begun as a pacifist, and he had no regrets; now he was the leader of a peaceful nation driven into war, and to revert to peace war must be made relentlessly, without hesitation or thought of consequences, until the world need no longer fear the menace of German militarism.

He was determined there should be no civilian inter-

ference with the military authority. In every war in which the United States has engaged, from the war of the Revolution to the war with Spain, the sudden increase of the army has compelled the hasty appointment of officers, many of whom secured their commissions because of their political influence rather than their military qualifications. The scandal of the "political general" should not be repeated in this war. The nucleus of the military organization would be the regular army, exactly as the *cadres* of the new regiments would be the veterans of barracks and field. Mr. Wilson did not know whether he had at hand a military genius, whether he had any man sufficiently versed in the tactics of modern warfare and with the requisite ability to take command of an army that must eventually rank with those of Allies and enemies, but he knew that if men trained in the profession of arms, who had given their lives to the study of their profession, who were not without actual experience of war, limited although it had been, were not fit to command, it was not likely he would discover a hidden genius among politicians or men with political influence. He must work with the material he had, perhaps at first to find it unsatisfactory, perhaps to be compelled to change and again to change, as other nations had; but to maintain the *morale* of the army and sustain the confidence of the country the men selected would be given their opportunity and not be hampered or embarrassed by political control.

Mr. Wilson steadfastly adhered to this policy. More than once he was offered the temptation to gain the fleeting approval of his critics and opponents by the appointment of popular "heroes" who understood the publicity agent's art of appealing to the public by a sensational trick. This was especially so in the early months of the war, when the people were told much of what was being done and going to be done, but of actual accomplishment they could see little; and the irresponsible individual who had an impossible scheme was sure to secure his audience, impatient because Germany was not yet suing for peace. No encouragement was given by Mr. Wilson to individuals seeking only their own advancement or to grandiose plans that concealed personal ambition. The Conscription Law had been passed, but that did not prevent ardent patriots temporarily retired from politics from offering to supplement the lagging efforts of the Government. Mr. Wilson was content to proceed in an orderly, systematic way, relying on men and methods whose efficiency was established rather than to trust to untried experiments or untested men. The success of the American army in France, the ability with which it has been transported, fed and supplied, the courage and discipline of its men and the skill of its commanders, which have earned for officers and men the high commendation and admiration of their British and French brothers in arms, would seem amply to vindicate Mr. Wilson's policy.

Mr. Wilson was equally determined that there should be no scandal, dishonesty or graft in connection with the war if high purpose, a proper system and wise precautions could foil the thief and the profiteer. In every war in which America has engaged, from the war of the Revolution to the war with Spain, the scandal of the dishonest and corrupt contractor and the incompetence of quartermasters and commissaries has been the shame of America. So far as the public has knowledge this war has been singularly free from maladministration and malversation. Mistakes have doubtless been made, — it would be surprising if they had not been, — money has been spent foolishly, unfit men have been appointed, especially in the first days when things had to be done without proper organization and time was more important than anything else; but taking the large view, the way in which the machinery of a standing army of a few thousand men was expanded to meet the needs of armies of millions is a tribute to the American genius for organization and the wisdom of the directing head.

3

In a time of peace the American political system is less responsive to popular will and less democratic than the British or the French; for the President may forfeit the confidence of the country thirty days after he assumes office and, unless he has been guilty of an illegal act, he can count with certainty on enjoying

the remaining three years and eleven months of his term; but a British Prime Minister or a French Premier who no longer has the confidence of the country knows that long before thirty days have passed he will be out of office. In a time of war this fixed tenure of the President has its advantages. Prime Ministers and Premiers must respect their parliamentary majorities and beware of their minorities; they must win victories in the field and fight electoral battles at home; they may defeat the enemy and yet have to compromise with their political opponents.

Mr. Wilson was secure. Congress might withhold its support, but it could not curtail his power or reduce his authority; his Cabinet was of his own making and could be reformed only with his consent. England and France had seen changes of government to secure the proper adjustment between a government created for peace and a government charged with war, Cabinets had been split and broken and reorganized, and the process had brought strange political bedfellows. America was responsive to the reaction of England and France. If coalition governments were necessary in those countries to win the war, was it not equally obvious that the President must now disregard the narrowness of party and call into council his erstwhile opponents? As is so often the case self-interest was wrapped up in the napkin of virtue. The Republicans, — and who shall blame them? — wanted a share of the credit in winning the

war, they wanted to share with the Democrats the honor and glory of executive responsibility; they wanted, looking to the future when politics would no longer be extinguished but would again flame, to be able to ask from the country that recognition to which they would be entitled for having brought victory to American arms. The only way they could secure what they coveted was by inducing Mr. Wilson to reform his Cabinet and give them certain portfolios.

Mr. Wilson would not consent, nor is it surprising. We have seen what his theory of government is, he has himself told us that he does not believe in divided responsibility, he has criticized government by Congressional Committee, and he has given it as his firm conviction that in the same person there must reside the power to plan as well as the power to execute. If these were his beliefs in time of peace, when a division of authority might do harm but could not cause irreparable injury, it was certain that his conviction would be strengthened tenfold in time of war when divided councils or delay in the execution of the plan would be fatal. More than ever was it necessary that the President should be the Prime Minister, that he should originate policy and be able to carry it out. It was a policy to antagonize his opponents, to subject him to the criticism of overweening vanity and an overpowering belief in his superior wisdom, but with a strength of purpose that was irresistible, with an inflexible will that was stubbornness in its unyielding

resistance to attack, argument or the promptings of expediency Mr. Wilson remained obdurate.

He had perfect trust in the loyalty and devotion of his Cabinet, he did not wish to risk the danger that might conceivably result from taking into his Cabinet men not of his own selection but who were forced upon him by his opponents, even if temporarily they had ceased to be political foes. Circumstances compelled Lincoln to do that, and we know what he suffered. "Did Stanton tell you I was a damned fool? Then I expect I must be one, for he is almost always right and generally says what he means," said Lincoln of his Secretary of War in that careless manner that was so often to confuse his contemporaries. But we have Lincoln the master of his Cabinet, as he always was when mastery was required, reading to them this memorandum on the fourteenth of July, 1864:

"I must myself be the judge how long to retain in and when to remove any of you from his position. It would greatly pain me to discover any of you endeavoring to procure another's removal, or in any way to prejudice him before the public. Such endeavor would be a wrong to me, and, much worse, a wrong to the country. My wish is that on this subject no remark be made nor question asked by any of you, here or elsewhere, now or hereafter."

There is nothing in Mr. Wilson's career, there is nothing in what he has said or done, that will make us

believe he held the same view of himself that Lord Chatham did: "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can"; there is perhaps in him the same self-confidence that was abundantly justified which made the younger Pitt Prime Minister of England at twenty-four: "I place much dependence on my new colleagues; I place still more dependence upon myself."

4

From the inception of his Administration Mr. Wilson had given the members of his Cabinet a free rein in the management of the affairs of their departments. Policy was his, to be retained in his own hands; administration was theirs; and perhaps no President had less interfered with his subordinates, or hampered them by the appointment of their subordinates, than he. He held his Secretaries responsible for the work intrusted to them; they must select the tools for the work to be done, and he would not ask them to work with unsuitable tools. His temperament made him dislike office brokerage; the time of the President was too valuable to be given to passing upon the claims of men to petty office when there were larger and more important things to tax his attention. It was a policy not to endear him to Senators and Congressmen having constituents to placate or to reward, or to the party workers who felt their importance required that they should be afforded an

opportunity to present their special claims to the President in person rather than to submit them to a member of the Cabinet; but it was the policy of a man big enough to deal only with big things and to be indifferent to the inconsequential.

With the outbreak of war Mr. Wilson saw the necessity even more rigidly to leave the Cabinet free and unhampered to carry out the policy which he broadly mapped out, and this, of course, applied especially to the two fighting branches, the War and Navy Departments. Mr. Wilson affected no knowledge of military affairs and made no pretense to being a master of strategy. He had none of that childish vanity attributed by a contemporary Frenchman to Thiers. Speaking once of a man raised to a high function, Thiers said: "He is no more suited for that office than I am to be a druggist; and yet," he added, catching himself up, "I do know chemistry." Whatever knowledge Mr. Wilson had of chemistry he would not feel himself qualified to compound prescriptions; he might have turned over the leaves of a work on tactics, but he was too humble and too conscious of his own limitations to flatter himself that having looked on the cover of a book he knew its contents better than the author.

Lincoln was well-nigh pestered to death by the crowds of applicants who thronged the offices and corridors of the White House, who interrupted him in his work and intercepted him in his walks to prefer their

requests; which Lincoln, always patient, always holding his sympathies unchecked, disposed of seriously or humorously as the case might be; as he did when he wrote to Stanton: "I personally wish Jacob Freese, of New Jersey, to be appointed colonel for a colored regiment, and this regardless of whether he can tell the exact shade of Julius Cæsar's hair." Lincoln, too, largely was his own Chief of the Staff, trying to spur on the lagging McClellan and cautioning Burnside not to break himself on Lee's stone wall, until he found Grant and Sherman and had confidence in them. And Lincoln, in his desire to do no man injustice, so scrupulous that he leaned backward, would not remove an incompetent general who was a Democrat, and more than once appointed men to high command to satisfy a political demand.

The White House has been a place of quiet thought. It has been a place of consultation, but not a market place for political hucksters. No Governors of States have come post-haste to Washington to urge the appointment of this man to command a brigade because of his services in the last election, or the obvious wisdom of giving that man a division because of the strength he could furnish the party in the next campaign. The politician has rarely seen the President; if his business was legitimate he took it to the War Department, the Navy Department, the Treasury, wherever it belonged. Men seeking commissions, not as generals but in the lower ranks, earnest and

patriotic men, willing to serve without recompense and to make their sacrifice, have been given their opportunity without having to bring political indorsement, for the system works without favoritism and the door has been thrown open wide.

Mr. Wilson has not dictated the operations of the field, he has left that to the men whose business it is; but when questions of policy, as distinguished from technical detail, were to be decided he has acted; and on one occasion at least he disregarded his professional advisers, who while not stoutly opposed were, for military reasons, reluctant to sanction the proposal.

In the early summer of 1918 the American army then in France was not ready to take the field as a separate organization, although many of its units had been sufficiently trained to make them a powerful fighting force. The British and French armies were hard pressed, Germany apparently had launched the drive that was to carry her to Paris, the Channel ports and victory. The British and French Governments asked that the American troops be brigaded with their own to reinforce their depleted ranks. The War Department, working on a matured and comprehensive program, was indisposed to accede to this request, believing that the American army fighting as an army under its own Commander-in-Chief and its divisional and corps commanders would, for psychological no less than military reasons, be more

formidable and render greater service to the Allied cause if held intact instead of being split up, even if the assistance which the British and French so urgently needed were delayed.

It was a question, it will be seen, that while in essence military was nevertheless one of judgment, vision and knowledge of American temperament. It was doubtless true that Americans would feel greater pride in being led by their own commanders and fighting as an independent army and retaining their own national identity than they would as auxiliaries merely to foreign armies; every military man knows that a composite force is rarely as effective as an army of a single nationality; in the case of American troops brigaded with the French there was the further drawback of language and methods. These were considerations properly to have weight with the General Staff, who dare not make a mistake at the beginning, and a mistake then would have been a blow to American *morale* that might have been irreparable. Mr. Wilson weighed these considerations with his customary caution and concluded that whatever might be gained by delay would be lost if delay enabled the Germans to go forward in their drive; conceding that a certain risk had to be taken, it was a risk justified by the circumstances; it was not one of those gambles which even success would not condone, but a legitimate risk of war.

A still greater test of statesmanship and the large vision, — and there is no real statesmanship without

vision, — was the decision regarding the sending of Allied troops to Siberia to support the Czecho-Slovaks. Mr. Wilson was not required to decide a purely American question, but he was sitting in an international council whose members were not entirely agreed as to their course of action, and again he held the casting vote. It is for the historian of the future to write this chapter; all that can be said now is that Mr. Wilson was confronted with a situation of extreme complexity which required the most delicate management to avoid friction and arousing enmity and do harm to the common cause. He was required to compose and reconcile, to use persuasion and to remain firm; to seek advice and to reject it; to display tact and moderation. Mr. Wilson was again subjected to criticism, the delay in reaching a decision was not understood; once more he was accused of hesitating, of weighing too narrowly where a man of boldness and a steady mind would have been oppressed with no doubts; but history, calmly reviewing all the facts, will say his policy was correct.

Mr. Wilson saw the necessity of unified military command, which had been discussed by the Allied Governments but never progressed beyond the realm of discussion. Here again it was not so much a military question as one of sound judgment, and the position of the United States enabled it to cast the deciding vote. Had Mr. Wilson taken the narrow view, had he felt it humiliation to place an American

Commander-in-Chief under the orders of a foreign Generalissimo, had he wanted to magnify the importance of the United States, he would have offered coöperation but rejected subordination; and one trembles to think what would have happened had Foch not been given supreme command.

5

Mr. Wilson had brought the American people to sanction war because he had made the war to them a moral cause. "It is as startling as it is touching," he said in one of his earlier speeches, "to see how whenever you touch a principle you touch the hearts of the people of the United States. They listen to your debates of policy, they determine which party they prefer in power, they choose and prefer as ordinary men; but their real affection, their real force, their real irresistible momentum, is for the ideas which men embody." But although the country was at war Mr. Wilson's work was not completed. He had been the evangelist, he still must remain the exhorter and the preacher; suffering and sacrifice and sorrow were to be endured, and the people must be heartened by the knowledge that they were fighting not for themselves, but for the morality of the world; when their spirit flagged they would be sustained and made strong again by the thought that theirs was no selfish purpose but they were giving themselves freely and with royal splendor to serve humanity.

But it was not only the morality of to-day that made its appeal to Mr. Wilson, which he was able to make his own people share, but the morality of the long future; and morality such as never before had entered into political calculations. The war in which the United States greatly against her will was forced to take part was to be the means, he hoped, to league peoples in friendship, to bring nations to deal more altruistically with one another, to unite men in a spiritual brotherhood, to reconcile the jealousies and soften the rivalries that kept the world excited and ever fearing war; but above all, to establish covenants of justice that should be faithfully kept, and with liberality. Had the United States not entered the war it is highly probable, it is almost a certainty, that when the treaty of peace came to be written that combination of stupidity, selfishness and immorality known as European diplomacy would again come into its own and crown sacrifice and reward heroism with the mockery of a peace bought by trickery and bargain. It was the thing that Mr. Wilson declared should not be, that could not be, because the war had become a war of ideals and there could be no surrender of ideals.

Addressing Congress on February 11, 1918, the President said: "The method the German Chancellor proposes is the method of the Congress of Vienna. We cannot and will not return to that. What is at stake now is the peace of the world. What we are striving for is a new international order based upon the

broad and universal principles of right and justice, — no mere peace of shreds and patches. Is it possible that Count von Hertling does not see that, does not grasp it, is in fact living in his thoughts in a world dead and gone?" Mr. Wilson was living in a new world; in a world of a new spirit.

The speeches and state papers of Mr. Wilson since the American declaration of war form a remarkable series which have affected America no less than the rest of the world; they have influenced Allied Governments and peoples in the same way that they have the American people; because of their force, lucidity, high purpose and exposition of the aims of the Allies, which are the aims of an enlightened civilization, so cogently expressed, with such depth of feeling and sincerity, Mr. Wilson has become the spokesman of the nations at war with Germany.

On April 15, 1917, the President appealed to the nation to put its whole strength into the war, "the grim and terrible war for democracy and human rights." At the dedication of the Red Cross building in Washington, on May 12, he said: "The heart of the country is in this war because it could not have gone into it if it had not first believed that here was an opportunity to express the character of the United States. We have gone in with no special grievance of our own, because we have always said that we were the friends and servants of mankind. We look for no profit. We look for no advantage. We will accept

no advantage out of this war. We go because we believe that the very principles upon which the American Republic was founded are now at stake and must be vindicated." In proclaiming the Draft Act, May 18, the President said: "The day here named is the time upon which all shall present themselves for assignment to their tasks. It is for that reason destined to be remembered as one of the most conspicuous moments in our history. It is nothing less than the day upon which the manhood of the country shall step forward in one solid rank in defense of the ideals to which this nation is consecrated. It is important to those ideals no less than to the pride of this generation in manifesting its devotion to them, that there be no gaps in the ranks. . . . The stern sacrifice that is before us urges that it be carried in all our hearts as a great day of patriotic devotion and obligation, when the duty shall lie upon every man, whether he is himself to be registered or not, to see to it that the name of every male person of the designated ages is written on these lists of honor."

Mr. Roosevelt had been anxious to raise a volunteer division and be commissioned its commander. He had offered his services to the War Department, which had not been able to accept them. The Conscription Law gave the President permissive authority to raise volunteer regiments, outside the draft age limits, the purpose of Congress being to provide a command for Mr. Roosevelt. At the time of signing the bill

Mr. Wilson issued a statement in which he declared he would not raise volunteer regiments, that the responsibility for the successful conduct of the war rested upon him, and he would not allow himself to be governed by political considerations. He said: "It would be very agreeable to me to pay Mr. Roosevelt this compliment and the Allies the compliment of sending to their aid one of our most distinguished public men, an ex-President, who has rendered many conspicuous public services and proved his gallantry in many striking ways. Politically, too, it would, no doubt, have a very fine effect and make a profound impression.

"But this is not the time or the occasion for compliment or for any action not calculated to contribute to the immediate success of the war. The business now in hand is undramatic, practical and of scientific definiteness and precision. I shall act with regard to it at every step and in every particular under expert and professional advice from both sides of the water. . . .

"The responsibility for the successful conduct of our own part in this great war rests upon me. I could not escape it if I would. I am too much interested in the cause we are fighting for to be interested in anything else but success. The issues involved are too immense for me to take into consideration anything whatever except the best, most effective, most immediate means of military action. . . . I should be deeply

to blame should I do otherwise, whatever the argument of policy, for a personal gratification or advantage."

At Arlington Cemetery, on Memorial Day, May 30, Mr. Wilson said the opportunity had come for America to show the principles which she professed and by pouring out her blood and treasure to vindicate those principles. "There are times when words seem empty and only action seems great. Such a time has come, and in the providence of God America will once more have an opportunity to show to the world that she was born to serve mankind."

Addressing the grizzled veterans of the Confederacy at their reunion in Washington on June 5, Mr. Wilson dwelt upon the mystery of God's purpose. "Many men, I know, particularly of your own generation, have wondered at some of the dealings of Providence, but the wise heart never questions the dealings of Providence, because the great long plan as it unfolds has a majesty about it and a definiteness of purpose, an elevation of ideal, which we were incapable of conceiving as we tried to work things out with our own short sight and weak strength. And now that we see ourselves a nation united, powerful, great in spirit and in purpose, we know the great ends which God in his mysterious Providence wrought through our instrumentality, because at the heart of the men of the North and of the South there was the same love of self-government and of liberty, and now we are to be an instrument in the hands of God to see that

liberty is made secure for mankind. At the day of our greatest division there was one common passion among us, and that was the passion for human freedom. We did not know that God was working out in his own way the method by which we should best serve human freedom. . . .

"We have prospered with a sort of heedless and irresponsible prosperity. Now we are going to lay all our wealth, if necessary, and spend all our blood, if need be, to show that we were not accumulating that wealth selfishly, but were accumulating it for the service of mankind."

At a Flag Day celebration in the shadow of the Washington Monument, on June 14, the President departed from his usual custom of speaking in generalities and specifically indicted Germany. The United States, Mr. Wilson said, had been forced into war because the extraordinary insults and aggressions of Germany left no self-respecting choice but to take up arms in defense of the rights of a free people and of its honor as a sovereign government. Germany had sought to corrupt the American people, to spread sedition among them, to incite Mexico to take up arms against America and to draw Japan into a hostile alliance. Telling how Germany had plotted and intrigued to carry out her ambition of *Mittel Europa*, how in every country the forces of German corruption were at work, Mr. Wilson continued:

"The great fact that stands out above all the rest is

that this is a People's War, a war for freedom and justice and self-government amongst all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the peoples who live upon it and have made it their own, the German peoples themselves included; and that with us rests the choice to break through all these hypocrisies and patent cheats and masks of brute force and help set the world free. . . .

"For us there is but one choice. We have made it. Woe be to the man or group of men that seeks to stand in our way in this day of high resolution when every principle we hold dearest is to be vindicated and made secure for the salvation of the nations. We are ready to plead at the bar of history, and our flag shall wear a new luster. Once more we shall make good with our lives and fortunes the great faith to which we were born, and a new glory shall shine in the face of our people."

In August the Pope addressed an appeal to the belligerents making certain suggestions as the basis for a just and durable peace. The President's reply, under date of August 27, and bearing the signature of Secretary Lansing, declared the Pope's proposals to be unacceptable because of the impossibility of relying on the word of the German Government. The United States had suffered intolerable wrongs, yet it sought no material advantage of any kind; it sought a peace based upon justice and fairness and the common rights of mankind, Mr. Wilson asserted.

In declining an invitation to address the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy at Minneapolis, the President, on September 2, wrote to Mr. Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labor and the Chairman of the Alliance: "No one who is not blind can fail to see that the battle line of democracy for America stretches to-day from the fields of Flanders to every house and workshop where toiling, upward-striving men and women are counting the treasures of right and justice and liberty which are being threatened by our present enemies."

Let us turn for a moment from these weighty matters to a letter couched in lighter vein. The President is an ardent lover of the theater; it is his only form of relaxation, and from the beginning of his Administration Washington has seen him at the theater two and three times a week. He greatly liked a play, and he wrote to the star, Miss Carlisle — perhaps he has written other similar letters but this is the only one that has been given publicity: "I am going to take the liberty of telling you how much pleasure you and your associates gave Mrs. Wilson and me the other evening in the admirable presentation of 'The Country Cousin.' We particularly admired the simplicity, sincerity and dignity with which you played your own very interesting part. May I not congratulate you on doing admirably well a thing that was thoroughly worth doing? The play is delightful, and you played the chief part in making it so."

Space will permit only limited reference to other important state papers. In his Thanksgiving proclamation of November the President said: "We have been given the opportunity to serve mankind as we once served ourselves in the great day of our Declaration of Independence, by taking up arms against a tyranny that threatened to master and debase men everywhere and joining with other free peoples in demanding for all the nations of the world what we then demanded and obtained for ourselves." Addressing the American Federation of Labor at Buffalo, on November 12, Mr. Wilson explained Germany's dream of *Mittel Europa*, declared "we must stand together night and day until this job is finished," and showed his scorn of the pacifists by saying: "What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it, and they do not."

In asking Congress on December 4 to declare war against Austria the President said: "Our present and immediate task is to win the war, and nothing shall turn us aside from it until it is accomplished. Every power and resource we possess, whether of men, or money or of materials, is being devoted and will continue to be devoted to that purpose until it is achieved"; but he reiterated what he had so often said before, that America was asking nothing for herself, attempting no injustice, crying for no venge-

ance. "Justice and equality of rights can be had only at a great price. We are seeking permanent, not temporary, foundations for the peace of the world and must seek them candidly and fearlessly. As always, the right will prove to be the expedient."

On January 8, 1918, in an Address before the two Houses of Congress, Mr. Wilson laid down the fourteen fundamental propositions on which peace should be concluded. "An evident principle," he asserted, "runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak.

"Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle; and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor and everything that they possess. The moral climax of this, the culminating and final war for human liberty, has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test."

The German Chancellor and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs having traversed Mr. Wilson's program for securing an enduring and just peace, Mr. Wilson on February 11 again addressed Congress, and after analyzing the rejoinders and stating anew

the principles which in the future must govern international relations, concluded: "I have spoken thus only that the whole world may know the true spirit of America — that men everywhere may know that our passion for justice and self-government is no mere passion of words, but a passion which once set in action must be satisfied. The power of the United States is a menace to no nation or people. It will never be used in aggression or for the aggrandizement of any selfish interest of our own. It springs out of freedom and is for the service of freedom."

Other notable Addresses of the year were delivered at Baltimore on April 6, in New York on May 18, at Mount Vernon on July 4 and again in New York on September 27. On every occasion Mr. Wilson affirmed the implacable purpose of the United States to use "force, force to the utmost, force without stint or limit" so as "to make the world safe for democracy."

6

What was the effect of Mr. Wilson's continual and continued iteration of the unselfishness of the United States and its use of force only to "make Right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust"?

It had this effect: It made the war a Holy War. Mr. Wilson had called it a People's War, which it was; but it was more than that. It was a war in which a nation had dedicated itself to righteousness. It

offered everything and asked for nothing. The history of the world offers no parallel. At the beginning it was frequently asked: "Why are we fighting?" "What are we fighting for?" The answer for statesmen would have been: "You are fighting to defend yourselves against Germany; German victory means that your turn will come next, and then it will be too late, because then you will be powerless"; which would have been the stimulus of fear; or statesmen might have said: "You are fighting because Germany has committed insults and outrages, which you must submit to because you are weak or resent because you are strong and proud," which would have stimulated courage and implanted a desire for revenge; and either would have been sufficient to arouse patriotism and to inflame the latent primitive passion of a virile race to fight when in danger or in vindication of insult.

Mr. Wilson made a richer appeal. To fight in defense of his own country is duty, to fight for a principle is altruism; and altruism, if it be in the heart of a man, is a more sustaining thing than the cold response to the obligation of duty, fine as is duty well done. To send an army of millions three thousand miles across the seas for no gain, for no recompense in territory or indemnity, not even to cancel a debt of friendship long overdue, but to defend an abstract cause, was as Quixotic an adventure as the world had known; so visionary that a practical people might well ask more substantial reward for their sacrifice.

Yet this is what Mr. Wilson did. Again and again he said to his people that they were to cross the seas in their strength not as the avenger but as the protector, not to profit but to spend, not to compete but to serve, not to conquer but to restore. Time after time he told them they should hope for nothing except sacrifice, they could expect nothing except suffering, their only consolation must be the approval of their own consciences; that alone must be their guerdon. They were to lay down their lives for countries of which they had never heard, for nations for whom they never cared, for peoples who meant little to them, fighting about matters that touched them not at all; and this they were to do so that peoples whose keepers they were not might enjoy the liberty that was theirs. They were to do battle under the banner of renunciation, their oriflamme was to be the crusader's cross of humility and generosity. It was the maddest thing ever proposed by a serious statesman, a thing so mad that men believed the President in his visionary idealism was cooling enthusiasm and stifling a glorious fervor that needed only encouragement to glow like molten metal in the furnace of patriotism.

Yet Mr. Wilson persisted. He preached his theme with variations, but it was always the same theme; always the *leitmotif* was disinterestedness, fealty to the right, the duty of America free to bring freedom to the oppressed and the enslaved. If it was idealism Mr. Wilson lifted men to his own exaltation. If at first he

spoke over the heads of the multitude they grew in spiritual stature and reached his own level, on their faces a new light shining. He quickened the spirit, he made men ask what was this morality of which he continually spoke; he made men search their hearts and ask themselves how true it was that America by her birthright of freedom held freedom in trust for the oppressed and was now under solemn pledge to redeem her trust. To the war-weary peoples of the Allied countries his words were an elixir. It brought to them not only new life but a new hope. They could not falter now, for the most powerful of all nations was marching her legions that mankind might be saved, willing to die that justice might live.

These speeches of Mr. Wilson were attuned to a world-wide audience; wherever there were men, there was his audience. He was never didactic, seldom argumentative; he was homiletical, hortative, the preacher taking as his text the simple virtues, morality, justice, right; assuming as of course his congregation believed in their canons and needed only to have them expounded for their faith to remain unshaken. He never ceased to appeal, and yet to his audience he seemed less to appeal than to point the way which men for their own salvation must travel.

On the body of a young American soldier dead on the battlefield of France, a correspondent reports, was found a card with these words: "America stands for freedom and justice and is always ready to give the

lives of her citizens that all the world may be freed from tyranny and live in peace and happiness."

The words were printed by hand. They were undated and unsigned. Who wrote them no one will know. There on the battlefield of France they were the echo of the President's words. They were the effect of the President's preaching. They had made one man know his soul. They answered the question: "Why is America fighting?"

CHAPTER XII

History and the Verdict

1

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to interpret Mr. Wilson as he has revealed himself through those things by which it is possible for the world to assess the character and motives of their governors — his speeches, writings and actions, which are the elements forming his policy; and by his policy alone can a statesman be judged. Yet there are certain aspects of his character which a man does not always reveal in what he says or writes; sometimes he consciously tries to conceal them, sometimes he is not conscious of them, and this lacuna can be bridged by the observations of men who have been given the opportunity to form a correct judgment. Briefly, in conclusion, these sidelights will supplement the interpretation.

In the gossip of Washington, — and gossip is not to be sneered at when it is taken for what it is worth; not the veracities of history, but the lightly formed impressions of the events of the day, — more than once it has been said with fervor the country was indeed fortunate that Mr. Wilson was not "temper-

amental"; that in a time of crisis there sat in the White House a quiet, retiring, almost emotionless man, too impassive to be in danger of doing a hasty or ill-considered action.

"Temperamental" is a vague and inexact term, but taking it at its current meaning, it perhaps better fits Mr. Wilson than any other word, which shows how popular opinion is formed and how easily it can be mistaken. He is a man of extreme temperament, but he has trained himself to self-control. He is naturally a reticent man, and reticence is a habit that grows. He is the antithesis of what is popularly known as a "good mixer." Some men there are with the good fortune to be at home in any company, who fit in easily in any circle. Mr. Wilson cannot, and never could. It is not only that he is shy, as has before been mentioned, which is a barrier to good fellowship, but he is naturally a serious man, — although he does not take himself too seriously, — which has made him somewhat impatient of the trivial; but he knows how to relax and to balance the serious things of life with the light. He can laugh at a limerick and enjoy a vaudeville performance at the right time; and with him there is a time for all things. He is a meditative man. Habits once formed are not easily broken. He early formed the habit of thinking and studentship, and when he came to the White House he did not change. He might, had he cared for it, done as other Presidents, made the White House the social

center, brought men and women about his table, found relaxation in their companionship and as host, or a much sought after guest, taken all that life in that respect could give him. But Mr. Wilson, for the reasons already given, takes no enjoyment in what is conventionally known as "society." Not forming friendships readily, those chance acquaintanceships which some men so delight in do not appeal to him. The idle chatter of idle women, and of men, too, does not interest him. He is no recluse, but he finds no pleasure in eating many dishes at a crowded table, whether in his own home or that of another. To him it seems artificial, foolish, a waste of valuable time. His contentment is in the family circle.

Mr. Wilson has not changed. The Princeton undergraduate was the President that was to be, but he has broadened, grown, developed with his years. He has grown fast in the last five years. Intellectually his stature is greater than when he entered the White House. He came to the White House with a certain provincialism, a certain narrowness of view that was the price he paid for the life he led. There is nothing more dwarfing than community life, whether it be the community of the cloister, the college, or the barracks. Men become too self-centered, too immersed in their own specialty; their eyes do not rise above their books or their breviaries; in the seclusion of their detached calm they lose a certain contact with the world; and men must be of the world, even if they cease to be

worldly. There is always an irrepressible conflict between the business man and the academician; the business man has a contempt for the professional mind because it is as unpractical as that of a child; the professor scorns the highly developed practicality of the man of affairs. Mr. Wilson came to the White House with the prejudice of his class.

All life is either growth or stagnation and decay. Some men reach their growth, whatever it may be, and stop, and the world is full of men who give promise in their young manhood and never arrive; other men never stop growing so long as life lasts. Mr. Wilson has not changed, because men do not change after they reach a certain age, especially when they are cast in a rigid mold and are of strong fiber, but his mental horizon has widened, his outlook on life is larger, his perception of things and men, of the motives that animate men, of the things that are the conflicting forces in life, is keener and yet softened; more just, one would say, and also more generous. The responsibilities of his high office have not aged him or magnified in his own eyes his own importance; but his sense of humor and his humility would save him from that.

A man who has known him for twenty years, — and there are few men who can claim a friendship of twenty years' standing with Mr. Wilson, — says he finds him younger, more witty, more alert, but also more certain of himself, with a greater grasp of affairs; his

mind, always quick, is now even quicker than in the past. And this man adds, curiously enough, that although he has known the President for twenty years he does not feel that he knows him. He baffles men. Yet another man, who has not known the President for twenty years but has been brought in very close contact with him during the last few years, declares that of all men Mr. Wilson is the least subtle. There is nothing subtle about him, but he is a straight thinker; and straight thinking is so rare, this authority says, it mystifies. Most men, he adds, do not think; the few who think have muddy thoughts. Mr. Wilson thinks straight and his thoughts are clear.

He is not a superman, my authority goes on. Endowed with a naturally good brain, he has developed it by reading and study and observation. His strength is his character. He has convictions. There are things about him one might wish could be changed; that would be different if he were the superman instead of being what he is, — the clay of common humanity. One might wish that he was not always quite so certain of himself, that at times he would have doubts and fears; that he might temper certitude with indecision. One might wish that he was more accessible, that he would consult more freely, that he would listen to suggestion, even if he rejected it. And one especially wishes that he were a better judge of character and had that instinct, rare, but possessed by some men and a gift priceless to those in authority,

to judge men. The President is not a good judge of men. There are about him men who have done him great harm, but there is a certain stubbornness and defiance of opposition in the President's character that makes him stick to men and blinds him to their faults, even though he knows they serve him badly and he must be the victim of their incompetence.

2

Mr. Wilson has described himself as having a "one-track mind", but it might be more appropriately said that he has a "compartment mind." He has the faculty of concentration, of complete absorption in the thing in hand to the exclusion of all else. His mind works in compartments. Figuratively he reaches out and opens a compartment in his brain as a systematic man opens a drawer to get a paper, who has his papers so precisely arranged that he gets it without any lost motion, and then closes the drawer, indifferent to the rest of its contents, even forgetting them until the time again comes for their use.

It is in the same way that Mr. Wilson's brain functions. He does one thing at a time, and until that thing is finished he is oblivious to the hundred other things each in their proper compartment and to be reached in their regular order. He does not scatter in his work, his thinking or his writing. He is systematic, painstaking, exact. It is this faculty of concentration that enables him to work intensively

and then to relax. When the compartments are closed the labor of the day is over.

Mr. Wilson's aloofness and isolation has been the topic of Washington discussion from almost the first day he entered the White House. Washington does not take kindly to a hermit President. The White House is the Mecca of the socially ambitious and the politically aspiring, and it was not in accord with tradition for its doors to be barred. The contrast was all the greater because of Mr. Wilson's immediate predecessors. Mr. Roosevelt had a naïve curiosity that could only be satisfied by coming in contact with the men he admired or who interested him; there was seldom a meal at which he did not have a guest, rarely a day in which he did not receive some man distinguished or celebrated, American or foreign, — not merely in his official capacity as the President and to utter a few formal words of perfunctory welcome, but to talk as man to man and to discuss the particular subject, poetry or pugilism, as the case might be, that made his visitor's fame. Mr. Taft was hospitality itself. He enjoyed having his friends about him; he liked to forget the cares of office in the companionship of his intimates, to listen to them and to add his own comment or criticism.

The closed gates of the White House are symbolic. To Washington they symbolize the President. The White House seems a place of inscrutable mystery, a mystery as great as the President himself. What

goes on behind its jealously guarded portals no one knows. Seldom does the President ask any one to break bread with him. The temple of Janus has been opened, but the White House has been more than ever impenetrably sealed. Foreign Missions have come to Washington and their members have been entertained at the White House; less the President could not do; but to no one else, outside of a very small circle, do the doors swing open. Even with the members of the Cabinet there is almost no social intercourse. They transact their business with him, they see him as necessity or occasion demands, but intimacy does not exist. Mr. Wilson, after five years in the searchlight of a hundred million curious and inquisitive people, remains as remote, as unknown, as elusive a personality as if he belonged to another sphere. His few, his very few, intimates may know him, but his own people and the world at large do not.

A certain analogy between the late Lord Salisbury and President Wilson in their common addiction to "blazing indiscretion" has already been noted; that analogy may be pursued a little further. Lord Salisbury likewise courted privacy. When he was at the Foreign Office it was a grievance that no one was able to see him; Ministers came from the four quarters of the earth expecting to talk to him at length, only to be told that they could put what they cared to say in writing. Most men place more importance on the spoken word than on the written. Most men prefer

to deal with their associates face to face, and to regard a few minutes' conversation as more satisfactory than letters running to pages. Lord Salisbury did not. Mr. Wilson does not. Officials have come to Washington anticipating the things they would tell the President, the questions he would naturally ask, the interest he would show. They have either not seen him at all or been dismissed briefly. They have departed wondering.

In his noteworthy biography of Lincoln, Lord Charnwood has said that the members of Lincoln's Cabinet thought of the Administration as his Administration, and that one member told his friends that there was but one vote in the Cabinet, the President's; yet, Charnwood explains, Lincoln deferred to his Cabinet, recognizing when he wanted advice and when he did not, sometimes yielding to them, but taking grave steps without advice from them or any one else. What the members of Mr. Wilson's Cabinet think of him we shall know when their diaries and letters are published, — or rather our children will know, — but what little we know to-day leads us to believe that Mr. Wilson has profoundly impressed his Cabinet. It is proper, of course, that the members of a Cabinet should believe in their Chief (which all of Lincoln's Cabinet did not at all times, it may be added), but between the necessities of official loyalty and personal attachment is a wide gulf; and it is all the more remarkable this strong admiration should exist in view of the coldly official relations between

the President and his advisers. But his strength, his purpose and his sincerity have made their mark on them, and, nearer to him than the public, they see in Mr. Wilson qualities of which the public is unaware.

It is unlikely that the future biographer will be able to say, as the biographer of Lincoln has, that Mr. Wilson deferred to his Cabinet or yielded to it. He has sometimes taken advice, but infrequently; it is doubtful if he ever permitted his own judgment or his own conclusions to be swayed by the remonstrances or arguments of his Cabinet. The position of the American Cabinet is unlike that of the Cabinets of England or France, whose members, while subject to the control of the Prime Minister, and who in the end must either sustain his policy or surrender their portfolios, still feel they have the right to discuss and argue with him, to point out to him the weakness or the impolicy of his proposed course of action. Members of the American Cabinet do not argue with the President, although they may argue among themselves. The President sits as a moderator, to hear the evidence presented, to compose the divergent views of its members, but not to have his own decision submitted to their judgment. The classic story of Grant and his Cabinet more than one President has told; and doubtless more than one President has remembered it even if he did not tell it.

On one occasion, according to the tradition, Grant found himself solidly opposed by his Cabinet. Cab-

inet questions are of course never voted on, but on this occasion Grant polled the members. They all answered in the negative. "There are seven votes in the negative," Grant calmly announced, "and one, the President, in the affirmative. The affirmative has it."

Yet Mr. Wilson, according to credible authority, will listen and be influenced when he is convinced that facts are submitted of which he was ignorant. It is well that the distinction should be clearly understood between policy and administration. Policy is conviction, the setting in motion of forces with the hope that certain consequences will ensue, although often in their dædalian progress the results may be different from the hope anticipated. Administration is the execution of the policy, the shaping of the forces liberated by policy so as to make them effective. Resolved on a certain line of policy, convinced that a certain thing must be done, as the individual must determine for himself his own conduct and abide the consequences, Mr. Wilson, solely responsible for policy, could not share his responsibility with the members of his Cabinet or with anyone. A weak man, a man uncertain of himself, knowing he mistrusted himself, would look for support, would cling with desperation to the fictitious strength given him by a dominating or persuasive member of his Cabinet, would yield and become stubborn, finally to act not as he purposed but as he had been swayed by the last or most ingenious appeal.

Whatever other charge may be brought against Mr. Wilson, it cannot be truthfully charged that he has shirked his responsibility or tried to share it. He has never sought to shield himself behind his Cabinet or the leaders of his party. He has demanded responsibility and accepted it. He has fought stubbornly against having it diminished. Like the aëroplane and the submarine, the War Cabinet is a creation of modern war. Lincoln did not have a War Cabinet any more than Pitt did; but Lincoln had his War Committee of the Congress as Pitt had his Parliament. In the early days of the war an attempt was made to saddle the President with a War Committee of Congress which should have power to supervise the conduct and expenditures of the war. Mr. Wilson at once made it known that if the pending bill reached him he would immediately veto it. Such a Committee, he wrote to a member of his party in the House, would "render my task of conducting the war practically impossible." The constant supervision of executive action "would amount to nothing less than assumption on the part of the legislative body of the executive work of the Administration." Recalling the War Committee of Lincoln's day, which "was the cause of constant and distressing harassment and rendered Mr. Lincoln's task all but impossible", the President pointedly observed, "The responsibility rests upon the Administration."

Here, once more, Mr. Wilson has stated with the

utmost candor his view of the function of the presidential office. The task of conducting the war is his. It is not the task of the Cabinet, not even that of the Congress. The responsibility rests upon the Administration, and the Administration is the President. The power of the President cannot be abridged any more than his duty can be divided. The result is that to-day Mr. Wilson's power is greater than that of any other man. He is his own Prime Minister. He is his own War Cabinet. He is by the terms of the Constitution Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy. And perhaps it would not be false to say that Mr. Wilson knows his power.

Despite this great power centered in his hands there is abundant testimony that Mr. Wilson has not abused it and that he has not considered it beneath his dignity to seek advice on subjects outside of his own knowledge and to defer to the superior knowledge of men speaking with authority. Mr. Wilson makes no claim to being a master of finance, but without being either a theoretical or practical financier he could see the necessity of reforming the antiquated banking and currency system, and he drove Congress forward to the work. The broad plan was policy, the details were administration; and Mr. Wilson had no false modesty in seeking expert advice and being guided by the men in whose integrity and knowledge he reposed confidence.

3

Mr. Wilson, it was said in a previous chapter, once remarked to a friend, "I always try to keep my vision ahead of the facts," and the man to whom he said it offers this comment and explanation: "By a process of elimination Mr. Wilson sees the bearing certain facts will have on a given situation and the effect they will produce, and when the facts have produced their results he is prepared to meet them. That is ascribing to him genius, at least an encompassing vision. It explains his aversion to seeing people and conferring with them, which has been accepted as an indication of both strength and weakness in a complex character — strength because of his self-reliance, weakness because he is intolerant of opposition and wants every one to agree with him and does not like to be convinced that he is wrong; but the truth is he does not want to have his vision clouded or his confidence in his own conclusions shaken. He knows that most men reach their conclusions on superficial judgment and without giving due weight to the facts; he knows, moreover, that men are unconsciously influenced by what we call public opinion, and public opinion is usually valueless when exact knowledge is required; and facts it too frequently scorns. Mr. Wilson keeps himself cloistered pondering the facts. There is something almost uncanny in the man, in his seclusion, his ear deliberately closed to suggestion, sifting and sorting his facts, working on them as a mathematician

would the factors of an equation; balancing, rejecting, eliminating; building up combinations and destroying them; until at last the answer works out, he proves it by his own applied rule, and is certain it is correct. It is one of the mysteries of the man, and I frankly confess that to me the man is a mystery."

Does Mr. Wilson ever give a thought to these speculations of his fellow men? One is inclined to think not, and his concern, if he have any, is that of Cicero's to Atticus: "What would history be saying of me 600 years hence? And that is a thing I fear much more than the petty gossip of those who are alive today." It is because he is willing to play for the verdict of history that Mr. Wilson thinks, in the words of one of his speeches, "It is service that dignifies, and service only"; that the kings of mankind are those who have won their own elevation to the throne "by thinking for their fellow men in terms of humanity and of unselfishness."